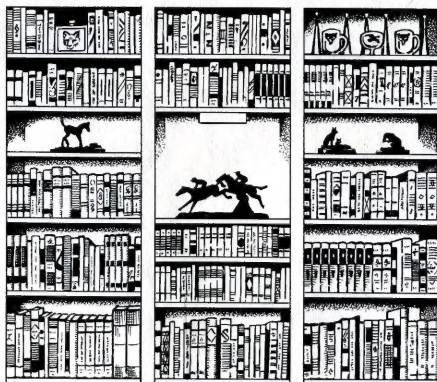




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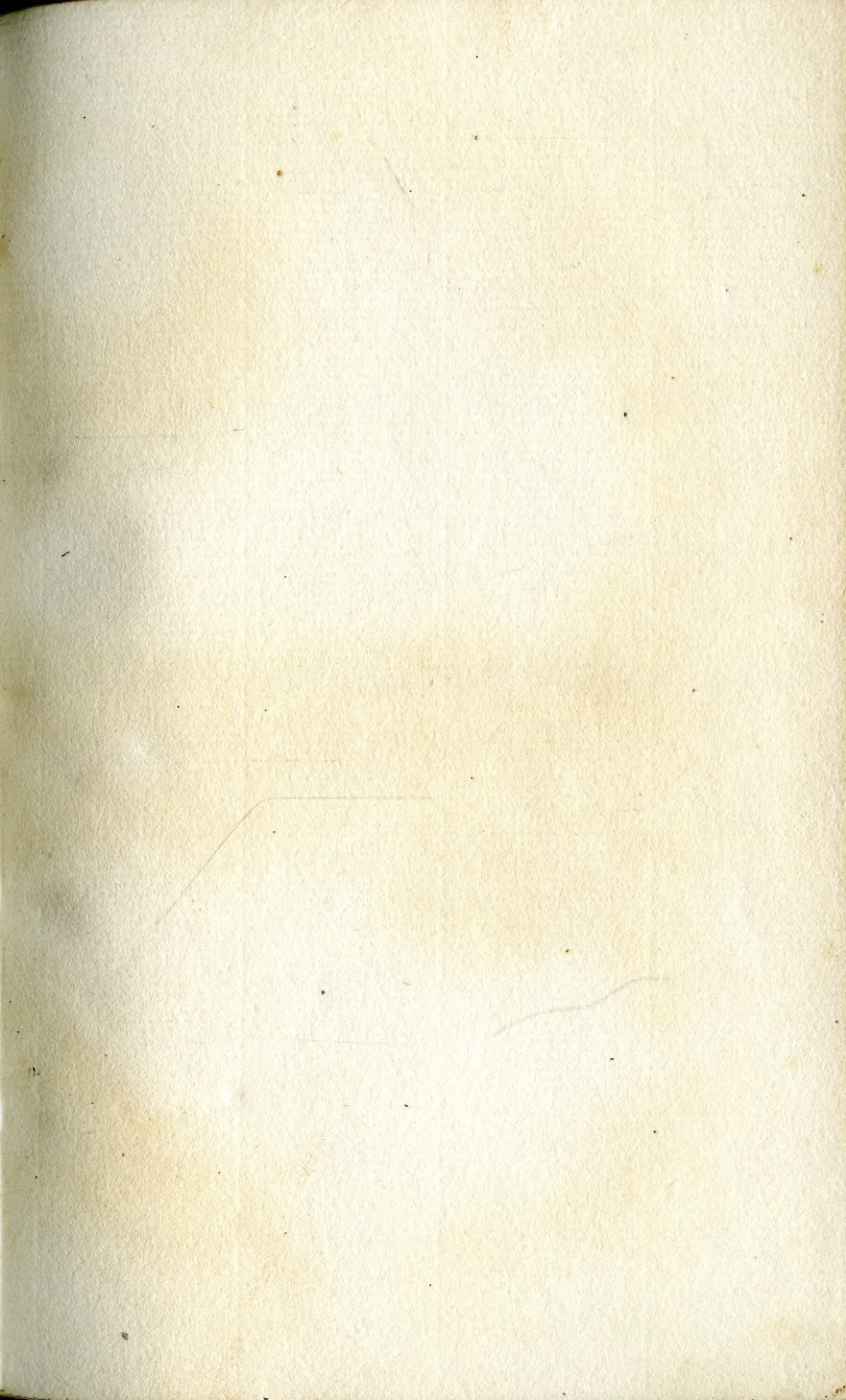


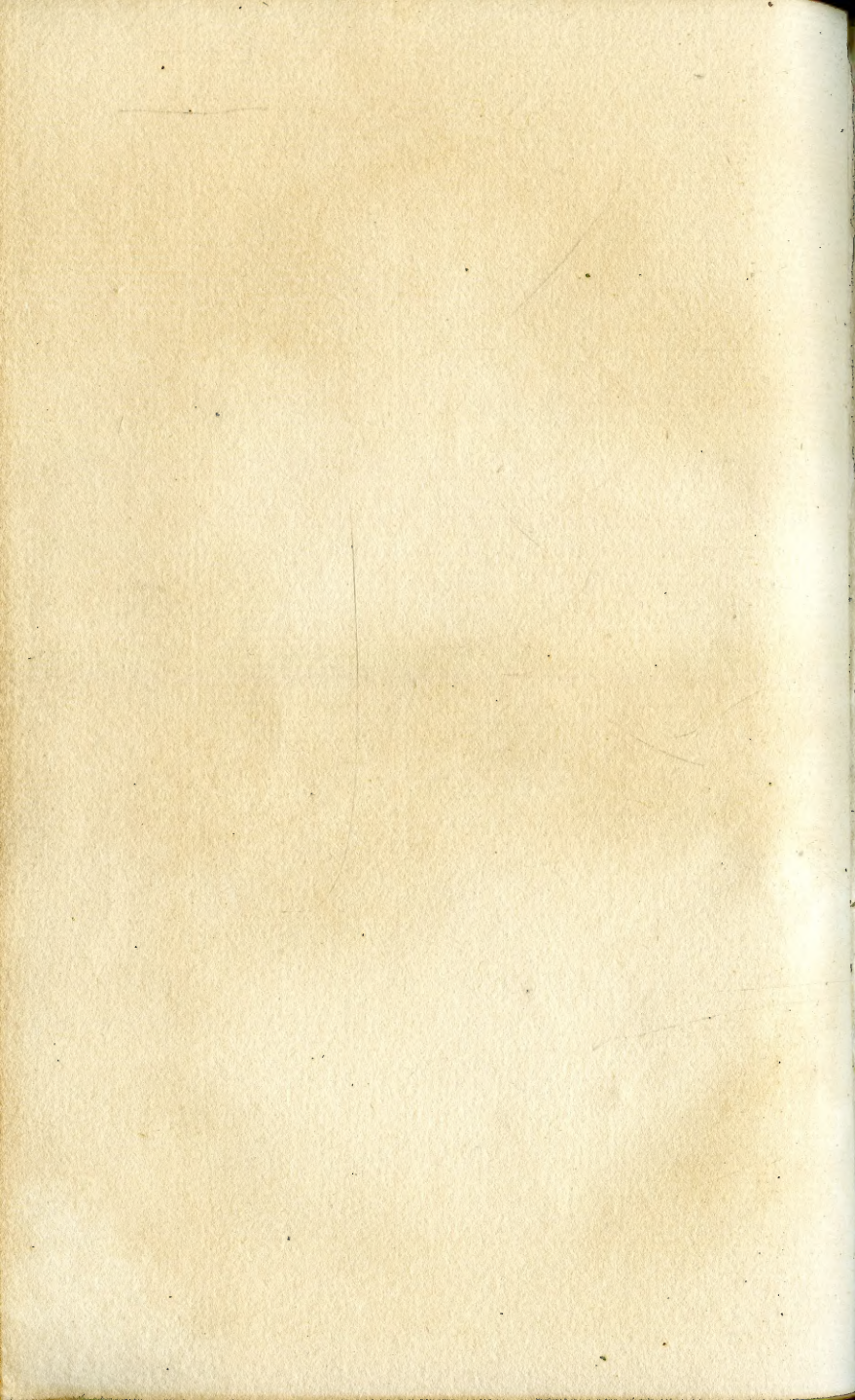


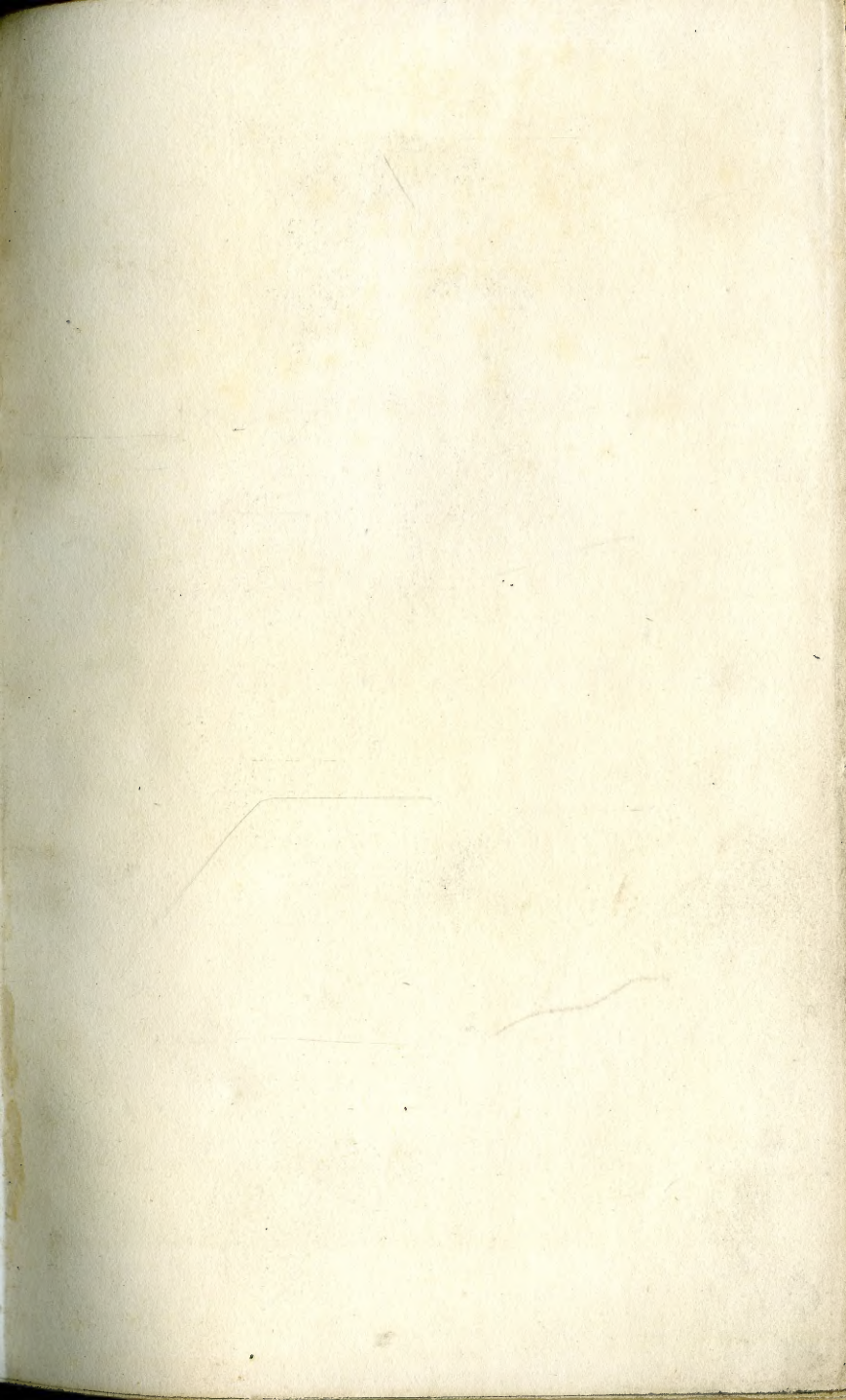


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STATIONER

1874-1875





BROOKLANDS

A

SPORTING BIOGRAPHY

BY

HERBERT BYNG HALL K.S.F.

AUTHOR OF

"Highland Sports" "Exmoor,"

"Spain and the Seat of War in Spain."
&c &c.

IN TWO VOLS



LONDON.

T. C. NEWBY,

30. WELBECK STREET,

1852.

STANBARD & DIXON, LITH. 7 POLAND ST.

DEDICATION.

By Permission,

TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT, K.G.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

WHO RANKS HIGH AMONG MEN,

HIGH AMONG SPORTSMEN,

BUT HIGHER THAN EITHER

AS A

TRUE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

INTRODUCTION.

It was my happiness, a lot awarded to few in this life, to possess a dear, a true and sincere friend, one who shared the pleasures of my boyhood's home, as my manhood's cares.

At school we studied together, played together, and fought with another, and having fought, became firmer friends than ever.

The periods which parted us during his brief life were short—our position was in great measure similar, both as regards tastes and professions. I loved him well, and lost him early—a fever, of only a few days' duration, released him from this world of care, and left me to sorrow with no common bitterness, for one who was gifted with far more than the usual virtues and attain-

ments allotted to man. It was his habit as his constant pleasure, to note down from time to time even the most trifling occurrences of every day life ; from this Journal, for the possession of which I am indebted to his laughter-loving sister, Gussy, I have culled such portions, as appeared to me to contain more than common interest and amusement, and while the compilation even of his most puerile thoughts and acts has caused me a painful pleasure, I trust they will not be found without interest to the general reader, more particularly, those who are fond of the sports of the field, divested of their coarser attributes.

The portrait of my friend, which accompanies this Biography, I may with perfect truth declare, has been so placed there, entirely by the desire of many personal friends, who were desirous to possess it. And by permission, with difficulty obtained, of a portion of the Brookland family still living, who on no other grounds would have permitted it to go forth to the gaze of a public to whom he was little known.

For the illustrations, I have to thank a most talented, and, I trust, rising young artist—Mr. G. W. Horton, of Cheltenham—and it will be a source of gratification to me, should their appreciation be of service to him with the public, and thus open a channel for that success which his merit as an artist make so justly due to him.

THE AUTHOR.

Louth Park,

April 8th, 1852.

BROOKLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

“How like a comedy is life !
With shifting scenes and changes rife,
Some sad, some gay ; but to the wise
A moral lesson each supplies.”

THE SUNRISE.

MY home was Brooklands, in the Vale of Berkeley ; one of merrie England's most glorious vales ; need I add more to prove the luxuriant beauty of its home scenery, or the enjoyments offered to man as an abiding place. It was, indeed, a rich and smiling portion of our noble Fatherland ; which under God, year by year, increases in natural charms, as I pray may its people in prosperity.

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VOL. I.

B

I was born in the good old hospitable month of December, when rounds of beef and well fed turkeys are devoured in abundance, and bright fires blaze on the hearths of old England, in the most delightful of all delightful seasons for a sportsman—as well as the merriest of merry periods for the happy and light-hearted,—when hunting the fox in the morning and the slipper at night. And many a pretty little morocco slipper have I run to earth, carefully hidden amid innumerable flounces—shooting woodcocks in low bottom copse, and telling love tales to ears ready to listen, while their owners sat on silk ottomans, made time pass cheerfully.

Ah! those were merry days, those Christmas gatherings of friends and relations dear, at the old Hall at home.

It was the day previous to that of Christmas, yet not exactly Christmas-eve, for the hour was about 2 P.M. that I first beheld the bright sunshine; a happy omen, so at least said my kind old nurse, and the realities of life have alone contradicted her. My admirable mother had been expecting for some

days to add to the family circle of the Westerns, and the worthy Doctor Knox, located at Brooklands, had already eaten sundry good dinners, played several games at piquet with the Squire, and swallowed sundry bottles of first rate port to the health of the expected guest, ere the hoped for event took place. On the morning of the day in question, however, his patient had become more nervous and restless—I conclude, ladies are a little nervous on such occasions. Nevertheless, as the hounds met at no great distance from the Hall, my father joined them. Towards the afternoon they found in a covert some eight miles distant, and after a brilliant run, without a check, killed in the open near his own park, through which they had chased their fox.

My mother's time had come; and when she heard the huntsman's horn, cheering on his gallant pack, she felt cheered also—and I, Frederick Western, was born, almost at the very moment that the varmint, dead beat, gamely delivered up his life and body to his staunch and eager pursuers. I may, there-

fore, very justly say I was born a sportsman; inasmuch, as when my good paternity elated by the first-rate sport he had enjoyed, entered the Hall, brush in hand, for the fox had been killed on his estate, and beheld the nurse approaching with a fine addition to his family, as she pronounced me to be in her arms; he ran the brush across my little face, and then with tears of delight and affection glistening in his dear old eyes, he declared I was born a foxhunter, and should be christened Nimrod. To this my mother most decidedly objected, and as her will was generally law, though to do her justice, she wielded her power with the most gentle sway, I was named Frederick. Nevertheless, my father said truly, through life I have been devoted to the sport, though purely as a sportsman who loves a horse and a dog, as the delights of the country.

Suffice that the head of my house was an English gentleman of other days, whose ancestors did not come into this glorious country with William the Conqueror or any of his French followers. No; he could

boast of the pure unadulterated blood of a Saxon; and from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, he was an Englishman and a sportsman. His property consisted of some four thousand acres of rich well wooded and luxuriant land in the Vale of Berkeley. The name of his place was Brooklands,—as such, at least, it is pleasing to my heart to recollect it. His income was derived almost entirely from the land on which he lived, and yet as in heart he was not so then, so would he not have now been a Protectionist, save that he ever protected the poor and the unhappy, the widow and the orphan. He expended his means liberally and like a gentleman—lived on the very best terms with his neighbours, and was a Churchman. Yet, he never by word or deed endeavoured to oppress those who disagreed with or dissented from him in civil or religious opinions. Add to this, he was a County Magistrate, who administered justice—and for all that he went a hunting and rode in the front rank. And further, I his son Fred, believe him to have been a good man, and a

good Christian, without any of the fulsome mouth religion among those of the day we live in, who imagine themselves fifty-fold his superiors.

In order in some measure to describe him, I will say, that had any friend or visitor chanced to have arrived at Brooklands early, at the season of the year when the Earl Fitz's hounds hunted our side of the county, which they did and still do on alternate months, if the meet was not very distant, they would have been as certain as the sparks fly upwards, was it a hunting morning, to find Squire Western, or the Lord of Brooklands, for so was he familiarly denominated, standing with his back to the dining room fire wiping his spectacles. He was a most aristocratic looking man, at that period possibly about sixty years of age, or less ; in height about five feet ten, firmly, though not robustly built, with hair already grey ; fine brilliant eyes and a Roman nose—the only thing Roman about him. His leather unmentionables, in the olden style, were a trifle tight, and his tops somewhat of a tan colour

(a vile fashion, which some always on the look out for novelty, are attempting to revive); but the polish on the boot itself might have served as a looking-glass, while his spurs were as bright as well cleaned silver. His blue coat with metal buttons was large and baggy, with side pockets; but altogether, there was no mistaking him for what he really was—a fine kind-hearted old English gentleman and sportsman who hunted with the beau Duke of Gloucestershire, and dined with him, how often, and few more welcome for all that, had he lived he would have voted for Lord John.

My lady mother was precisely a fitting mate for such a lord. She was a well born, well bred, refined, and gentle woman, who entered with enthusiasm into all the pursuits and pleasures of her husband and his sons, welcomed his friends, and attended to his comforts. She had a companion and two pets, my laughter-loving sister Gussy, and a bright eyed varmint little Scotch terrier, called Wasp. The former loved hunting as well as my father or myself, when allowed;

while the latter did frequently play truant from the ladies' boudoir to follow in the rear of the flying hounds.

So much for my respected and well beloved parents. I have introduced them in a great measure in detail the more clearly to define the stock from whence I sprung, and in which I ever felt pride. At the period of my birth, and for many subsequent years, strict economy was a term unheard of and unnecessary in reference to the Brookland establishment; the stables were well filled with hunters, the house rarely free from guests. But that evil period in history—the Railway era—came, with the devastating effects of an express train in the centre of a flock of sheep. And my good father, who like many wiser men, saw the earth rise through the centre of his estate to form a line to G——, in an evil hour succumbed to the all-powerful charm of gold, “gold,” and was persuaded to make fortunes for his younger children. And faith! the reign of “King Hudson” proved anything but a glorious one to him. He did make fortunes,

that is misfortunes, for himself, as for his well beloved sons. Corbeau, his favourite and admirable jet black hunter; Brilliant, his pet Gussy's beautiful mare; and my dear mother's cob, Punch, which drew her four-wheeler; with the addition of the family hack, Silvertail, hunter, or anything when wanted, were soon all that remained of a stud of sixteen. The chariot stood unused in the coach-house; and although Mr. Western still went out with the hounds occasionally, and from time to time received a few familiar friends at his table, the light of other days had faded at the old Hall at home. And far more painful than all was the knowledge that his cheerful spirit was giving way to the feeling that he had injured those he best loved by speculation, of which matter he was totally ignorant. And so the hitherto brilliant laughing eye began to fade; the healthy appearance to give way to mental suffering, untold to those around him, whom he loved too well to pain. But they loved him not less fondly. And so they saw and felt all he vainly endeavoured to hide.

In the meantime my elder brother, the heir to the estate, never a first-rate sportsman, though a lover of hounds and hunting, gloried in his diplomatic duties as a Secretary of Legation among the meerschaum smokers, while I held his Majesty's commission as a full-pay Lieutenant, and my younger fraternity was about to enter at Christ Church, it was said to be a parson; if so, I fancy the black-coat will often show us the lead in the Vale.

It will now be necessary that I name one or two persons on the Brookland Estate more particularly connected with my tale. The one, Farmer Barleycorn, an awkward sort of would-be squire among the village belles, who had his newspapers addressed to him, Zacariah Barleycorn, Esq., the Elms, Gloucestershire. He resided in a low-built farmhouse, with a yew tree before the door cut into the shape of a peacock; and I once counted nine laurels in his garden; therefore why the dignified appellation of the Elms for his thatched roof mansion who can say? not I. His superiority, I presume, among

his friends and fellow labourers in the neighbourhood consisted in his always having a few clear hundreds at command over and above his rental; a good possession, forsooth, yet not a cause of discontent by any means I should imagine, nor precisely a patent of gentility. His inferiority to those of a higher class, therefore, with whom his hundreds could give him no place, being utterly without education, rested solely on a silly desire to make himself what he was not; for in reality he was a kind-hearted, humane, and honest man. He would appear occasionally at the covert side, on a horse whose real value was possibly twenty-five pounds, and ride at times recklessly, at other times indifferently. When my father approached him, Barleycorn would touch his hat in a sort of how-are-you-squire way.

Squire Western: "Good morning, farmer."

"Good day, good day, sir."

"Well, how are the times with you, Barleycorn? Glorious weather for hunting, and equally good for farming, I take it."

"Times are bad, Sir, very bad indeed. If

things goes on as they have done of late, farmers must give up port wine, Squire, and take to small beer. I gave a matter of fifty for this nag, Sir, fifty !” My father looked up with astonishment.

“ Aye ! Barleycorn a nice horse.”

“ Yes, Sir, fifty ! I declare all the money. I could have sold him for double the amount in a year a-gone, but now, Sir, they ‘ hex-ports’ ’um—no, I means ‘ himports’ ’um ; but its much the same, is it not ? from France and Olland. In fact, there is nothing but foreign cattle in the country, and we have no chance with home bred nags. Yes, Sir, even turnips I am told come from Russia by tons weight, and of course we farmers cannot live. We are absolutely ruined by game preservers and the advance of the times.”

“ But you have your land on your own terms, Barleycorn ; and if you are in fear of being ruined, why not give it up ? I do not desire to have any one as my tenant who—”

“ Oh, ay ! but, Sir, I think the hounds have found ;” and away goes the ruined Squire Barleycorn, while Daddy, putting his

sleek black hunter, Corbeau, at an awkward stile which lands him in the field with the hounds, says to himself, "That uneducated discontented braggadacio is a humbug."

The run over, the fox killed, my father returns leisurely homewards—he is getting old and an hour's good hunting-run contents him—when he observes a respectable man of sixty or more, dressed as a farmer ought to be, leaning against a gate superintending the penning of some sheep, "Here, Harry, my man," he cried out; "how are you? be good enough just to fasten my curb chain. Thank you; that's a good fellow—how is your family, and how are you—thriving I hope?" "All well at home, thank you, Sir—we do not get richer, but I see no great reason to complain; corn is low, true enough—but my land is good, and my landlord better. So we must even do our best, and God will help us."

"And so he will, be assured, my honest fellow; I wish I had a larger and a better farm to give you, you should have it. Good day!—here's my hand." And thus, as he

jogged home, he soliloquized : " Would that men instead of complaining of evils, hard enough in all truth to bear, would endeavour by double energy and industry, if not entirely to remove them, at least, to prevent their becoming worse. True enough, the minority may now suffer from the late wise political measures—what then ! the majority who scarcely existed a few years since, now live."

CHAPTER II.

SOME years since, previous to these railway disasters, my younger brother and I had just come home from Eton ; my blue-eyed sister, Gussy, received us at the lodge-gate as the chaise drove up ; we forthwith alighted, and the trio walked joyfully towards the house. The sweet girl then and there informed us that our elder brother, who had left Christ Church, and was learning diplomacy under Beau Palmerston, at the Foreign Office, was expected home at the end of the week ; that the Earl's hounds met at Keswell on the following Saturday ; and that Farmer Barleycorn had purchased a new five-year

old, called Jumper, which he declared could jump the Severn; also that dear old dad had declared we should have a mount by turns on Silvertail, or maybe on one of his other nags. Happy were those days—never to be forgotten, while memory lasts—when trifles caused so much hilarity; joyful was our meeting; endless the plans formed for amusement, hunting, shooting, and coursing. As far as relates to my own personal prowess as a sportsman, I beg to announce that I was first initiated into the science of gentleman-jockeyship at some juvenile donkey-races which we got up among our young friends of the neighbourhood, and which came off in the park during the summer holidays; and never was Derby or St. Leger looked forward to with more unfeigned delight. Donkeys were brought into requisition from all parts; a course was staked out—a straight run home duly roped in; ladies and ladies'-maids employed to make silk jackets and caps, and front the bridles with the riders' colours. At length the bright and happy day arrived. No less than thirteen donkeys

had been entered for the valuable stake of half-a-crown each, p.p. ; and, after four well-contested heats, I won it by a head, on a black donkey called the Duchess, belonging to a sweep, to whom I gave half my winnings : inasmuch as, in addition to the loan of the animal, which I had fed on corn and trained for a week previous, he lent me also an undeniable spur, into the mysteries of using which he had fully initiated me. This spur was unquestionably, from its form and make, against all sporting rules ; and, had the question been submitted to the Jockey Club, it is possible both the sweep and Fred Western would never have divided the cash ; but things passed over quietly. The sweep still hunts—and I fancy votes for the Duke ; I still live to recollect the race ; and as for the “ noble ” animal, the last time I ever saw it, it was carrying a very fearless pretty little girl, who was vainly endeavouring to induce it to go the contrary way to that on which it had determined : but the matter is indifferent, doubtless it is dead. Yet I never saw a dead donkey ; reader, have you ? The

happy evening of our arrival over, we, the brothers, retired to our sleeping sanctum—that is, I, Fred Western, and my more juvenile brother Arty, since a Christ Church man—sat over a blazing fire, in full confab as to the ways and means of passing our time agreeably. “Well,” said I, “this is glorious news. The Earl meets at Keswell on Saturday; we must both go, that’s decided. But we cannot both ride on one horse, that’s equally decided: and our paternity will certainly mount Corbeau, as will Gussy appear at the covert side on Brilliant. Brenda is lame, and Smasher is denied to us; for Thomas says, no hand but his own or Dad’s can hold him. I should like to try. Nevertheless, at all events, go we must, and well mounted too. Therefore, brother mine, I will tell you what I propose.—Let us walk over to-morrow to Farmer Barleycorn’s at the Elms, and ask if his paragon of a five-year old is for sale; if so, I shall try him with the hounds. As for attempting the Severn, that I shall leave to him. But if we have a run, and the brute can go one hundredth part as well

as he affirms, by the blood of my ancestors I will see the end of it." "Agreed," said Arty, adding, "but now as to costume. You know we cannot precisely appear at the covert side as we were wont to do, previous to being Etonians; besides, you are a fifth form gentleman, and can therefore, of course, don the scarlet coat or Montem toggery." "Unquestionably I can; moreover, I have built a pair of white cords on tick at Peters', but as yet I have not ventured on the outlay for tops. Hitherto I have worn knee dabs and Wellingtons, as we term knee-caps, and they must do." "Ah! perfectly. And I have a pair of white cord trousers; and as old Silvertail can go as straight as a crow, if the hounds run fast my costume will scarcely be remarked. But touching the tops. It occurs to me, Fred, as our illustrious elder brother, the Plenipo that is to be, could never have idled away so many terms at Christ Church, light weight as he is, without doing a little bit of amateur jock, or steeple-chasing or herring-hunting, or, at all events, appearing amongst the swells at the covert side,

inasmuch as he was a gentleman commoner, which implies he was no common gentleman, there can be no question but that among his kit we may discover a prize; and so thy legs, Fred, being of the rural order, may, I fancy without much difficulty, fill their interior with credit." "By jingo! a good thought; here, bring the candle, and let's at once to his excellency's chamber." We did so, and lo! within a wardrobe, the lower part of which was half-crammed with boots and shoes, to our joy and admiration, we there discovered a pair of tops; and what tops! new, bran new, polished, and of perfect elegance as to shape. Eagerly I seized the treasures, and not without difficulty, for the gentleman-commoner's legs were a trifle less robust than mine own: with sundry struggles I pulled them on, and with still more difficulty my younger fraternity pulled them off; but he quickly decided that legs swell at night, that rest and the cool morning air would effect the desired reduction of calf, and, with this conclusion, we bid one another a hearty good night, and were soon as fast

asleep as light hearts and tired bodies could make us.

As I descended the stairs to the breakfast-parlour on the following morning, the first person I encountered was my fair and bright-eyed sister. I saluted her with a tender pinch—I know not where at the moment; yet, if memory fails me not, she cried out somewhat loudly, “Have done, Fred. Are those your Eton ways?” “Yes, darling,” said I. “At Eton we are frequently assailed matutinally most severely in the breech, to give us an appetite for breakfast. So run, pet, and make the tea; for Arty and I have decided on a ramble to Farmer Barleycorn, to look at his new horse, and you must be of the party.” “With all my heart,” she replied, “but dispense for the future with your Etonian salutations. Bear in mind, you are now at home for the holidays.” “No need to be told of that, fair lady; so be quick with the bohea; I long to have a look at the river jumper.” No sooner was a hearty morning’s meal despatched, consisting of partridge pie and fried potatoes *ad libitum*,

the young lady soon making her appearance, well wrapped up, with thick walking boots, and fur cape, than we started, accompanied by Wasp. The morning was fine, but cold ; in fact—a thoroughly enjoyable winter's day ; and I, for one, declare that I know of few pleasures more agreeable, putting sporting out of the question, than that of a brisk walk in the winter season, with a cheerful party of well beloved friends, and a dog or two, as companions. Moreover, winter or summer it mattereth not, the rich vales of merry England have always a home and agreeable appearance, and barring those of Devon, few can surpass in brightness of aspect the luxuriant vale of Berkeley. Years, however, have passed—alas ! how rapidly !—since that happy morning ; when we three went merrily along, now vaulting a stile, now dragging Gussy through a black thorn, to the detriment of cloak and bonnet, now handing her over a muddy ditch, now rambling through a well-known covert, flushing a pheasant or woodcock. I know not what might have been the thoughts of

Wasp, delighted as the little fellow appeared, both as regards his companions and their fun; all I can answer for is that I, Fred Western, had, for once in my life, a heart void of care, and a head full of mischief; and I fancy both brother and sister were precisely in the same position. At length, panting and laughing, we mounted up a steep ascent, then walked quickly along a narrow lane shaded by some fine elms, and at length beheld the residence of Farmer Barleycorn — pardon me, Z. Barleycorn, Esq., the Elms, Gloucestershire. As, however, some account of his abode may be interesting to those who reside in great cities and desire to learn the style in which gentlemen farmers live, I will even devote a new chapter to the subject of our visit.

CHAPTER III.

THE Elms—which, by the bye, would be better named Peacock Farm, from the fact, as I have already stated, of there being what was originally a fine yew-tree, concocted into a peacock with a flowing tail—stood on a gentle eminence overlooking one of the finest vales in England. The house was a moderate-sized low, irregular, building, sheltered solely by one or two elms, and the farm buildings in its rear. This building was thatched; and its outward appearance bore little of beauty or comfort. Nevertheless, the magnificent corn and hay-ricks, which stood hard by, indicated anything but a want

of protection, save the protection of fire-engines from incendiaries or others. Wasp gave notice of our approach by scattering a fine brood of turkeys, sending some score of ducks into a pea-soupy horse pool, and seizing a fat pig of the Chinese breed by his curly tail. Having called him off, we knocked at the squire's door, and were kindly and respectfully received by a middle-aged female—half housekeeper, half friend and associate, who opened the door to welcome us. “Ah, Miss Gussy! is that you? I am glad indeed to see you, ma'am. You are quite a stranger in these parts. And pray how is your worthy papa, and your good lady mother?” These queries having been responded to, the good woman continued: “And master Fred, and Arthur too! from Eton for the holidays I conclude. How they are grown! and Wasp too!” patting the little animal. “Pray walk in; I'm glad indeed to see you. So you walked over from the Hall. There will be fine doings there this Christmas, and all of you at home.” “Indeed will there!” said I, as we entered through a narrow passage,

and were thence shewn into a clean little parlour; which, however, like all such parlours, was only to be used on specific occasions, highdays and holidays; consequently there was no fire, no comfort. The chairs were placed in situations that made them difficult to sit down on; over the chimney piece there was a gilded looking-glass; two or three pictures or prints hung round the room; not a book was to be seen, and the only thing approaching food for the mind was an old county newspaper. Even the looking-glass looked unsocial, with its horrid muslin cover to keep off the flies. And at length, forgetting my general courtesy, I fairly sat down on the edge of the table. Miss Arnold—for that was the good hostess's name—who appeared to have sense and kind feeling, understood our youthful discomfiture; and approaching Gussy, who being very cold was rubbing her little white hands to keep them warm, she apologized for the want of a fire, adding, "that if not objectionable she would find more comfort in their usual sitting room." "Objectionable! not a bit of it,"

chimed in Arty: "pray take us to a good fire. The kitchen and comfort, say I! and the best is generally found there." This point being settled, we were introduced into another room; something of the right sort, with a touch of the olden times, when farmers were generous, hearty farmers, and felt pride in their calling—as well they might. The fire blazed brightly, on which was cast a large log. The room was half parlour half kitchen, though used only as the former. Here and there the walls were adorned with daubs of old grandmamas and papas. The floor was half carpeted; but around, or rather on each side of the fire-place were settles, which kept the back of the sitter secure from draughts; and on each side of the fire-place an alderman might have sat and enjoyed his mug of home brewed. "This is the place for me, ma'am," said I, perhaps too freely; "worth all your half-and-half parlours in the world. By George, I can fancy a man who has paid his half-year's rent, and owns a few of yon ricks, on which he has raised no money, coming home after

a brilliant run with the Duke or the Earl, and finishing up the night with a pipe and a tumbler or two—just here where I now sit. Why such a man needs no king for a cousin, or fear of a sleepless night. Miss Arnold, when I sup with you, prithee set the good cheer here by the fireside, and I shall fancy I am truly entertained by an English yeoman. But where is Mr. Barleycorn. We have walked all the way from Brooklands to see the new nag he wishes to sell; I hear it is an out-and-outer. Where is he?—in the yard? shall we seek him?" But at this moment Barleycorn entered, and gave us a hearty welcome. "Well, Miss, but this is new indeed to see you up here. And these brothers of yours—how they do grow!—like swedes in a wet season, 'pon my life!" Now I always believed Farmer Barleycorn to be a good-natured (say if you like kind-hearted) man, and I believe he would do any little kindness for his friend or neighbour—perhaps a large one; for aught I know; but as I grew older I found he had one fault that I never could get over, which was, that

although, as I have said before, he possessed a few hundreds always beyond the world (and was therefore comparatively a rich man), he was never satisfied save with himself. If the weather was fine, it was too hot or too dry; if wet, too wet, and so on. Having many of God's blessings, he never appeared sufficiently grateful. In other respects his faults lay more with the village damsels and the parson than himself. The parson, a good easy priest! declared he was an example to the parish, because he was under his immediate control, and always gave half-a-crown in charity after a little bamboozling; he being the only man in the parish besides the owner who could afford to give above a shilling. But the girls were the destruction of poor Barleycorn. They believed him to be worth his weight in gold: if so, he must have been a walking California. Therefore, at idle times, instead of improving his mind as well as his farm, he never looked into a book, and we boys sometimes fancied he could not read one; and was given to wear fine waistcoats and finer cravats, and

at last I really began to fancy he expected to be asked to meet our beau Duke at dinner at Brooklands. But I believe the man's faults were in his head, and not in his heart; as is the case with many of his class, who are told and believe, instead of learning and judging—in proof of which, no sooner had I mentioned the new horse than he exclaimed heartily, “New horse! yes, I just have, Master Fred, such a horse as you never cast your eyes on, save Corbeau, your father's black hunter, I'll warrant; but you shall try him, and welcome. Let me see. Why, by dad, the Earl meets at Keswell on Saturday; so you shall try him then. I means to go myself on Blaze-away. If this weather lasts we shall have sport, and he'll carry your weight over the Severn.” “I have already heard of his being a first-rate river jumper, Barleycorn; but the Severn is broad; moreover the banks are somewhat muddy.” “Ah, never mind—never mind; put him at it straight, he'll go.”

Here Gussy laughed outright, and Arty winked at me; but even this did not entirely

settle the question. "Well, may we have a look at the horse, for it's a long walk home?" "Oh, certainly—certainly; but first have a bit of luncheon. Here, Miss Arnold—Sally, what have we got?" Now, as we had had a brisk morning's walk of some four miles, and being late, and accustomed to the bad habit of dining early also—that is lunching, as people term it—we were nothing loath, and the luncheon made its appearance. Notwithstanding the breakfast, a rough walk and a "sixteen-years-old" appetite made it heartily welcome to me, Fred Western, at least; and as I sat in that cozy nook, by the bright wood fire, I pictured to myself (having a knowledge that Barleycorn had a name for hospitality) the abundance which would be placed before us: "A two-quartern loaf, sweet, brown, home-made and home-baked," I whispered to Arty, with a salutation similar to that with which I had favoured Gussy in the morning; which made him start up, to the astonishment of all present; and I added, as he sat down again, not quite in such brotherly proximity, "A

Gloucestershire cheese as big as a beer-barrel ; a chine methinks, or a gammon, or both ; then either some rashers with eggs, black puddings—possibly a piggy has lately died—a cold pork pie, or a griskin. Then a flagon of ale for the male visitors, and some mulled elder-berry wine for Gussy.” Devil a bit of any one of them. The warmth of the fire and a light heart had caused my imagination to fly back to olden times, when such things were as ne’er may be again. Behold a maid of all work—God help the class ! from my heart I feel for them, much as their presence is unpleasing ; for I think it is painful to see the daughters of Eve turned into dirty slaves. Well, be it as it may, enter a maid of all work, with hands as black as coals, and eyes to match, who placed on the table a tray, forsooth, and a tray cloth—which for aught I know to the contrary was occasionally a towel—and on the tray appeared a bottle of “red wine” and a bottle of “white.” But whether the so-called red wine was Port and the white intended for Sherry, I cannot say ; as I did

not attempt to taste. There were also some sweet biscuits, and (believe it who can) some oranges; and the only thing eatable was a piece of cold roast veal and some baker's bread. However, it was doubtless all very kind and all very genteel; but imagination never could have pictured such an entertainment under such a roof, had not eyes seen it and throats swallowed. I attacked the veal; and having refused the offer of either "red wine" or "white," declared I preferred the home-brewed malt on the sideboard; but fancy, alas! was again running wild, for it turned out sour cider.

No doubt all this change from hearty or natural warm-hearted hospitality, to attempts at absurd finery and aristocratic efforts, is attributed to Free-trade. Be it so. I am no Protectionist save as regards foxes and the unexampled heartiness which was wont to reign in the homes of our English yeomen. But come, Gussy, finish that red wine of yours; and do you, Barleycorn, introduce us to your stud, for I am dying to see the nag. Be of the party, gentlemen sportsmen, who will—the more the merrier.

CHAPTER IV.

“A horse ! a horse ! a kingdom for a horse !”

BEHOLD the farm yard of Barleycorn : for brevity's sake I will drop all aristocratic appellations. Reader, let your imagination fancy a poetical illustration of this rural spot : A milkmaid, with bright eyes and rosy cheeks, milking an Alderney, the perfume of whose breath (the Alderney's not the milkmaid's), together with that from the new milk, vying with the honeysuckle, which hangs in clusters around the rustic farm portal ; a splendid game cock standing, in pride of place, and as if really conscious of

his pluck as his beauty, on some clean straw in the centre of several choice hens of the black Spanish breed, over whom he reigns by right of nature as by prowess ; some fine ducks, attended by a drake (fit subjects for a picture of Herring's) floating over the surface of a pond hard by, in which, their labour o'er, the farm teams allay their thirst and refresh their limbs ; on the one side of the yard are ranged the stables and corn sheds, on the other some splendid ricks, the centre as clean as draining order and fresh dry fodder could make it. Now put your imagination into your breeches pocket, and your pocket handkerchief to your nose, as poor dear Gussy did, and practically view the case and the place, not as nature made it, but the will of man. In other days I have been led to fancy, and forsooth I do so now at times, that a farmyard was a scene where hens cackle, ducks quack, pigs grunt, and cows bellow and are milked ; but since our once jolly English farmers have become grumbling Protectionists, all these pleasant fancies are vanished and obsolete ;

and what were once pleasing spots of rural industry and beauty are now in many instances become simply large yards, for the making and deposit of manure. Such, then, was the scene we beheld : a vast accumulation of mud, mire, and manure ; a dirty duck-pool ; and two still more dirty and disconsolate wallowing long-backed pigs. But our desire was the stable and its contents, not the yard and the piggeries ; and Gussy, nothing loth to see the river jumper, being well *chausée* (or, in plain English, having a good pair of cork-soled boots—which all girls blessed with pretty feet should have in the country), followed Barleycorn, who led the way, apologising for the dirt, and of course declaring the weather, not he, was in fault. As we step across the yard my juvenile fraternity thus addressed me : “ Recollect, Fred, if he is truly the sort of horse our good yeoman asserts, we toss up for choice ; head’s for Silvertail, tail’s for the Jumper.” “ Agreed,” said I, just signing the agreement with a brotherly slap on the back ; which made him sing out so loudly,

that, while Gussy screamed, Barleycorn, who had his hand on the stable door, threw it aside and rushed in; as a gander I had unconsciously run against, actually assaulted me in the calf of the leg, and increased the confusion. Order being restored, we entered the stable—such as it was—“all in the rough,” as Barleycorn truly asserted and we most fully admitted; and there stood two nags—a strong-looking grey mare, and the undeniable Jumper.

“Behold,” said Barleycorn, “look, Master Fred, you see a couple of ‘horses;’ fit to carry the Duke himself. The grey’s by The Pope out of Mr. Soapy Spongy’s* own sister to The Cardinal by Wiseman; a better mare never crossed a deep country with a heavy weight on her back. She has one fault, however—she rushes at her fences like a ‘mad bull from Rome,’ and requires a good steady hand, and a strong curb on her, to prevent her overreaching herself. And there, Miss Gussy, that’s the ‘harse’ Jumper; gen-

* Probably the present Mr. Spongy’s father.

tle as a lamb, carry you as quietly as Brilliant—or Master Arthur either; five-year-old and sound; the best fencer in all England; came over from Ireland; I bought him for fifty from an Irish dealer;" and, turning to me, he added, in a sort of half-whisper, "by Harkaway out of the Flying Dutchman's dam; won two steeple-chases and a two-year-old stakes at the Curragh." "Probably when he was there," added the youngest Etonian; "and got those round legs in training."

But Barleycorn took all this very good-humouredly; for in truth, though poor the compliment, he was what is generally termed a good-natured man. But Eton boys, devoted to field sports (as were all of the Western family—in fact it was in their very blood)—boys accustomed to ride to hounds as soon as they could cross a pony—boys who daily during the holidays, winter and summer, were accustomed to visit their father's well-filled hunting stables, were not likely to be contented with a sight of the nags, standing half-clothed in a rough-looking stable. And Arty, doubtless to show his knowledge of

horse-flesh, requested Mr. Barleycorn to lead forth the gallant steeds, in the following easy terms: "I will tell you what, Barleycorn: produce your Harkaway colt and the grey Pope mare from this somewhat-gloomy den to the light of day, and then you shall have my practical opinion both of form and sinew. Just put a snaffle first into the mouth of the chestnut, and trot him forth under this fine chestnut-tree; I will throw my leg over him, and see if he can go."

"Go!" said Barleycorn; "he will carry your weight like a bird."

Behold the gallant steed led forth! If memory fails me not, I will describe his general appearance. Fancy a rusty chestnut, without a white hair, standing five hands three inches, rather more than less; an admirable shoulder, with good flat head, open nostril, and brilliant eye, but placed on an awkward neck; sides flat but deep, with hollow ribs; long and low in the back; good flanks, with an immense bangtail almost covering his ugly hocks; with round legs, shewing much work; the fore ones standing

somewhat apart, the toes inclining to the north and south; take him, however, all together, he had the appearance of speed. But in truth I should have preferred to test the merits of that speed on turf or light fallow land, rather than on the road or in the heavy; nevertheless, altogether he had the appearance of a steeple-chaser far more than a hunter—at least such hunters as stood in the Western stables. Barleycorn, however, was highly contented with his prize. So while Gussy smiled at the idea of the animal's carrying her gently, Arthur nothing daunted, asked me to give him a leg; and, being firmly seated, looked like a monkey on an elephant. And Barleycorn, rubbing his hands, declared for all the world "that the Jumper was the picture of his sire save his head, which was the Dutchman's, all over. And he can fly too, Master Arthur; so just give him a turn round the paddock, to shew off his paces to Miss Gussy." "Agreed." At first he tried a walk; but the Jumper had as much idea of walking as a tailor with tight boots and corns: walking was evidently not his forte. Then

came a trot, and with it a stumble, though the ground was as smooth as a carpet; but this was the fault of the rider—so said Barleycorn—not the ‘harse.’ At last my young fraternity sat back, resolutely shook the snaffle, and away they went, though somewhat too fast, forsooth, for the size of the field; and I fully expected horse and rider would have gone over the five-foot wall which enclosed the mead from a deep lane, for he was evidently a puller of the first degree, and while the snaffle in his mouth was like a thread, the rider on his back was a feather. But that young rider had a heart, which has since faced a savage enemy at the head of a squadron of cavalry; and a hand, though only that of a boy, which was up to the trick of holding a horse far better than many which could have lifted him from the saddle, and none shews the knowledge sooner than the animal ridden; so when within a few strides of the wall he turned him along its side, and then putting him straight at a flight of hurdles, which divided the meadow land from some penned-off turnips, went over like a

swallow. Then, easing the Jumper, he came over again across the grass land at a good gallop ; and pulling him up as he approached us, threw himself from the saddle, saying, very coolly, "He will do. He can jump : that's all I care."

"Can he?" said Barleycorn, in an ecstasy ; "I should say he could as well as any 'harse' in England. What did you think of that, Miss Gussy ; like a jump, warn't it, Ma'am ? All his legs over at once—high as a turnpike gate."

"Yes," said I, "he cleared them well ; but they were only hurdles, and I can jump them."

"Hurdles !" added Barleycorn ; "indeed I'll put one on top of the other, and I warrant he clears them both."

But the winter's day was rapidly closing. Gussy, with all her love for her brothers and of sport, was getting chilled by standing ; so, thanking Mr. Barleycorn for his hospitality, we proposed returning homewards. Ere we left, however, he good-naturedly intimated his wish that one of us should shew off the Jumper at the approaching meet ; adding,

“that if the Squire saw him go, he would be soon in the Hall stables—and cheap at a hundred.” So it was agreed that Thomas the groom was to come up early on the Saturday morning and bring him down to Brooklands; leaving us to arrange which brother should have the honour of riding him. And thus, having gained our wishes, we bid Miss Arnold and Barleycorn farewell, and hastened on our way—taking Gussy between us, while Wasp led the van.

There were only two days intervening between that on which this little vaudeville was played and the one on which the much-longed-for event was to come off; and those who are ardent sportsmen can readily realise in their minds the delightful—I may say all-absorbing, anticipations of pleasure which filled our young hearts. Young! do I say; when fox-hunting is in the van? Bah!

What age, what profession, what station is free?
To sovereign beauty mankind bends the knee.

And so it is when sport is the question, more particularly the most exciting of all sports—

England's true and unrivalled pastime -- fox hunting. With a flying fox in the van, followed by a gallant pack, if a Minister of State be one of the field for the time being, the affairs of the nation are as chaff before the wind in his imagination; away and away, over hill and dale, over gate and brook, he leads or follows with the eager riders. The chieftain who has led armies to victory, cannot always lead a field of fox-hunters; but his heart beats with an excitement and enjoyment in unison with him on the lusty cob, who goes as long as he can. Men of all grades, all professions, all ages and positions, love the noble sport: it is the birthright of an Englishman. May our rural districts ever echo to sound of horn and the voice of hounds! If the truth be told, more than one bishop on the bench can ride to hounds; and, forsooth, they might, and do, commit daily far greater errors. Let him of the West pull on his long black boots—wigs are no longer worn—and hie him to the covert-side; there he would gain health, and be out of mischief; and instead of spending thousands in legal and

unchristian warfare, ruining others, and causing discord and anger and dissatisfaction to enter many a heretofore peaceful rural home, let him buckle on his spurs, buy a good horse, and join the chase; as bishops have not seldom done—in days lang syne, headed a rebel army; his conscience, as his appetite, would vastly improve. And even should the sweep of Gloucestershire be there, what then? Simply two black-coats would be added to a society where all men, if not their horses, for the time and place are equal, if they behave themselves and ride fair.

On arriving at the Hall, we found the dressing-bell had rung, and poor Gussy was somewhat tired; so we hastened to prepare for dinner, nothing loath, considering the luncheon. And a merrier party never sat down to a meal; where happiness and health, combined with appetite and love, most thoroughly reigned. A full account of the morning's ramble mightily delighted the dear old squire; as he declared, after kissing his pet Gussy, and giving her a glass of good old port to bring the roses to her cheek, which

the walk, having been somewhat too long, had faded. He then filled us each a bumper to fox-hunting, and while laughing heartily at the account of the trial of Jumper and the diplomatic manner in which we had secured a mount—which he declared could not be surpassed by Talleyrand—he added, producing a five-shilling piece, notwithstanding the remonstrances of my lady mother, who held out against the spirit of gambling, that then and there, on the bright mahogany-table on which the dessert had been placed, that we should toss the best out of three, according to agreement—tails for the Jumper, heads for Silvertail; which we forthwith did amidst shouts of laughter—the luck, as we then supposed, falling to me. And amid the shouts of us all three, it was decided that Fred Western and the Jumper were to jump together as long as they could. On going up to the drawing-room, we found that Gussy had been sent tired to bed; while the brothers received a gentle admonition that the strength of a young and delicate girl was not equal to that of an Eton boy; and so for the future,

when our rambles exceeded the limits of the park or the home-farm, she generally accompanied us mounted on a pony called Quiz—from his peculiar ugliness. But for all that, he was one of the best little animals that ever was shod. I shall pass over the next two days of those ever-to-be-remembered happy sporting holidays, though I fear not but that there are some hundreds of lads—aye, and of lasses too—feeling at this very moment that I write these lines, the day subsequent to that of merry Christmas! aye, and acting precisely as we did then. Would that I could join in their sports! may be so, I should not be the least hilarious of the party; though forsooth the Hall is now desolate, and the stable empty, where once love and laughter so truly reigned with unequalled affection, generous hospitality, and unwonted courtesy. Suffice we were up early each morning; now in the stables, discussing the merits of Silver-tail and the Jumper; now out ferreting rabbits, ranging the park, up to every fun and frolic: in which, to do her justice, when out of my mother's sight, or that of Miss

Wilson, her beloved governess, Gussy not seldom led the van. On one occasion we locked the old housekeeper out of her room, while we pillaged her jam and store of mince-meat; and on another the butler into the cellar, where, however, having a candle, he doubtless made himself comfortable. Then we shot pheasants with air-guns, by way of variation; and in order to play at poachers to perfection snared our own hares. Ah! those were merry days, a long time ago, at the old Hall at home.

It was the last night previous to the hoped-for day of sporting happiness; true we had been constantly out with the hounds on ponies. But a year in the life of two schoolboys is an age, in after-day a mere passing shadow; from the frock to the trouser, still more from the shoe to the boot; while from the back of a pony to that of a hunter is an event only to be equalled by the change of an Administration or the abdication of a Sovereign. And this event was to take place on the morrow.

We had retired once more to our sleeping

snuggeries, which were only separated by a door, which door was, of course, no separation whatever; and dire were the preparations which took place; the tops were again paraded, spurs, boots, and breeches, as trousers, inspected and laid out; for Thomas had had a thousand-and-one orders to put all things in proper form. The night was clear and starlight, rather inclined to frost: and although those whose hearts are not in the chase may smile at the apparent absurdity of these truthful details, nevertheless so are they. The window, in the course of an hour, was opened, more or less, a dozen times, and out went a head, when the following dialogue took place: "How's the night, Fred?" "Clear and starlight, but no frost, brother mine." "By George! if we find in Clover Gorse, just won't I take the shine out of Barleycorn's Jumper?" Then a little sporting talk, or compliment or two to the guests who had dined that day at the Hall. Boys will be boys! "I'll tell you what, Fred—that Jemima Walker girl, what is she?" "A weaver's or a sugar-

baker's filly, come from Bristol or Bath I believe; staying at Squire Nettleton's. Gussy says she is considered a beauty with a fortune." "A fortunate beauty! nevertheless she shows no breeding; terribly bad pasterns, wants hand rubbing, falls off in the hind-quarters, and I'll bet a shilling she has a temper like the —. But let us have another look at the night." On this occasion Arty goes to the window. "By Jove! it's getting cold." And no wonder, inasmuch as he stood at the open window in his shirt. A cloud, however, was soon discovered rolling over the bright moon, wafted by a light south-westerly wind—satisfactory proof that, as regards the weather, all was right; and with a hearty "Good night" the light-hearted brothers were soon buried in a sound sleep, undisturbed by dreams or care, and made evident by the sonorous music of the bassoon order, which broke over the silence of the household.

CHAPTER V.

When with hack and Havannah each danger defying,

In cover I rattle in hopes of a run,

Fast flit my cares ; as the summer dews, flying,

Vanish away from the face of the sun.

There the hunt are all met, for the country is famous ;

The wind's in the south, and the scent pretty good.

"Come, Philip, now give us a gallop to tame us !"

"We will if we can, Sir." "Yoiks, into the wood !"

Not a skirter amongst them—but crash they fly into it.

That's Vanity speaking ! "Yoiks ! Vanity, hark ;

Stand steady, for Reynard will break in a minute !

Tallyho ! there a halloo—he's off for the park."

HAIL the daybreak on that happy morn-
ing ! Daybreak indeed ! for the winter's

sun had scarce brightened the eastern skies, ere once more the windows were again thrown aside; and joyful were our exclamations at the state of the weather. A broken and cheerful sky, just fanned by a mild south-westerly breeze, which was fast dispersing a slight fog that still hung on the rushing trout-stream which ran meandering through the park—all gave reason to believe it a thorough good hunting, and what is far more to the purpose a good scenting day.

“A southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaim a hunting morning. Tallyho! Yoiks forward!” I exclaimed. “I wonder whether Thomas has gone to Barleycorn’s for the Jumper,” added Arty. “By the Pope! just won’t I stir up old Silvertail? that’s all.” “Take care, my boy, he does not deposit you on your tail; he is a rare horse at stiff timber, so says dad.” “Well, if we come to old Nettleton’s park-paling, I’ll show off his paces.” And with similar jokes we proceeded to disturb the whole house. In fact, we were already dressed and descended ere Molly, the under housemaid, had

commenced the dustification of the drawing-room ; or Mr. Hind, the butler, had taken his first matutinal snooze, or half slept away the effect of the previous night's grogation. Nevertheless, we walked forth in high glee ; first towards the stables. There we found the lads hard at work, hissing away like steam engines, and strapping with thumps the ribs of poor Silvertail with sufficient force to inflict bruises black and blue on any one's side but that of a horse. Mr. Bradly, my father's—governor's, I should say, though I dislike the term—master of the horse, a true lover of quadrupeds, but by no means a good judge of horses, as fresh and clean as if he had been shaved and dressed by steam, his thick shoes well polished, his gaiters fitting his somewhat slim legs to perfection, while his knees being made for breeches—which all men's are not—with his hands thrust in the pockets of his well made, cut off, dark green coat, stood watching the proceedings of the stable duty—a true disciple of his calling. As we entered, he was addressing a lad who was

adjusting the clothing of Gussy's mare ; who, if I might judge from the appearance of her coat, which was as sleek as though it were July instead of December, had well done his duty ; and clipping—a most convenient, but not the less an unnatural habit—had not then come into general fashion. “I'll tell you what, my lad ; if Miss Gussy Brilliant isn't turned out better nor any horse in the field to-day, I'll just welt you for your dinner, that's all ; so look sharp, and then bear a hand on Corbeau. You know the squire won't throw his leg over a horse that turns a hair after a twenty minutes' burst ; so put your whole heart in your elbows, do you hear ?” “Yes, sir.” “Well, then, mind what I says, that's all ; for I am a man to my word.” So he was, truly, when the correction of stable-boys was concerned. And, to do him but justice, he was an admirable superintendent of a stud ; so far, that if he did little himself, he took care that others should do it for him, while he received the praise. At the moment he was holding forth we entered ; when Arty exclaimed : “Hallo ! Bradly,

what's the matter? Anything amiss with Silvertail? Has Thomas gone to Peacock Farm for the Jumper, eh?" To the last question he replied first, perhaps wisely. "Yes, sir; Thomas started half-an-hour since on Punch, so that he might lead him down fresh." "That's all right." "And there's nothing the matter with old Silvertail." "He is as fresh as a two-year-old, and he'll carry you like a pigeon." "Then what's in the wind?" "Why, sir, I was just giving the lad George a bit of paternal advice in stable ways. You see, sir, birds that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing, on the right or the wrong side of their mouth. The lad's a new one, sir, since you were last at home, and wants correcting at times, particular about Christmas. He can beat all the parish at pitch-and-toss; and as for cracking a walnut, eating a pudding when he can get it, now squabbling, and now kissing on the kitchen-maids, there is not his equal in all Gloucestershire. And pon my word," he added, turning to me, "I verily believe he sucks the Bantam eggs your lady mother—her ladyship I mean—is so par-

tickely fond of for breakfast.” “The deuce he does !” I added ; “then I wish you would welt him, as you say, till he lays them again.” “I just will, sir, in future ; for there’s not a bit of truth in his whole body.” “At all events,” I added, not wishing to be too hard upon the lad, “if the grooming of Brilliant is his handiwork he deserves absolution for a week ; so give it him ; you can do that in defiance of the Pope. And now tell me, Bradly, what do you think of the weather ? Will the scent lie in the vale ?” “Scent, sir, scent ? it’s a question for filosofers ; be assured, sportsmen know nothing whatever about it, and never will. It’s a question, sir, unanswerable. Pitch on a good scenting day, and then take out the hounds and have a run, and send the man that pitched on it to London to exhibit as a conjuror. I’ll tell you what, Master Frederick—I knows the scent of a beef-steak and inions from a beef steak and chalots, though I prefer the former ; but as for telling you whether the weather being mild or cold, wet or frosty, is good for scent, is beyond me, sir. Here, you lad George,

quick ! get the basket, run ! How often have I told you to be handy, and see that the horses don't foul their beds ? Now, sir, all the ventilation in the world won't keep a stable healthy if these matters are not attended to, and it's impossible to be standing here all day." As well we might, we quitted the stable, after this harangue, with shouts of laughter, telling Bradley that if we had such a burst with the hounds as he had given us as regards scent, we should be heartily satisfied.

As I now, after the lapse of long years, sit writing in my snuggerly, small, it is true, but snug and old-bachelor like, the sides adorned with books and trophies of the chase, with my friend Western's notes of his early life before me, I confess on this, the 22nd night of January, 1851, I find myself occasionally rising from my easy chair, and pushing on one side the curtains, and unbarring the shutters, to look forth and see—as did he in those merry days—what says the night for the hunting of to-morrow ; and although I find that the stars shine brightly, and the wind is due north—the apparent forerunner

of a frost, which has been so long absent from "merrie England," I am nothing downcast in my hopes of sport; for I have long been of Mr. Bradly's opinion that scent is scent—as regards beef-steaks and onions; but as regards foxes, a question which even "philosophers" have never been able to decide on. In confirmation of my assertion, permit me for a moment to come to a check in Fred Western's career, while I place before my readers a few truisms as regards hunting. On the night, or rather on the afternoon, of 20th December, 1850, not a month since, I ordered my gallant grey The Doctor, by The Colonel out of Flare-up, to be prepared to join the Duke of Gloucestershire's hounds at a meet called Yatton Kennel. The day previous had been frosty, rather severely so, nevertheless towards the afternoon it gave, and I decided to send the nag to covert. As I was dressing for dinner, however, being engaged to dine with a friend in the immediate neighbourhood, I beheld cloud after cloud disappearing; and when I walked through the park it was a clear, sharp, bitter frost. Among the company

assembled there was a young lad who had just come home from Eton, who caused me to think of days lang syne ; for he had a pony, which pony was bound for the meet, in company with The Doctor ; and three times during that evening, after the ladies had left us to our claret and the Pope—who, without any scent, we run without a single check to earth, in a deep old stone pit—three times, I say, did he run round the house, and, for aught I know, across the park, to see how looked the night, which way blew the wind, and each time returned with a longer face, to inform the assembled party, among whom there were several sportsmen, that “hunting we could not go” on the morrow ; but he was wrong. On leaving the house about eleven P. M., I stood without the door to light my cigar, and I can answer for my nose and fingers being well nigh frozen ; the ground was as hard as iron, the sky brilliant and clear ; and the moment I reached home I countermanded the gallant grey, and in my mind made other arrangements, which I ought in courtesy to assert were as pleasant

as fox-hunting. And so were they ; yet not precisely so exciting, as the lady with whom I proposed a long Christmas walk was not "my ladye love."

When I rose the next morning the brilliant sky had vanished ; no sun shone o'er the woodlands on which my chamber-window looked : it was a dense, dark, undeniable, unmistakeable, hard, black frost. No sooner dressed than I walked into the garden, placed my foot on a flower-bed which lay due south, and protected—it was as hard as iron. As for hunting, I felt it was as much out of the question as riding a race through the Burlington Arcade. I therefore sat down quietly to breakfast, and having demolished at least a pound of Oxford brawn, came to the conclusion that the hounds could not hunt—nor I, nor any one else—at all events till the Monday following, if then, it being then Saturday. And with this feeling I read the "Daily News," without envying Cardinal Wiseman or President Napoleon ; and then proceeded, with a book and a cigar, to the greenhouse, not wishing to see the stable on such a day.

About the hour of twelve—yes, it was quite twelve—a friend called in, almost breathless, to say that the frost was giving, and that a sportsman had ridden towards the meet. “Madness !” I replied, “mere nonsense. The hounds will not go ; and if they do, it will be merely to walk back again.” Nevertheless, I went again into the garden, and true enough it was thawing, but so slightly that I mentally decided “a-hunting we could (not) go.” This matter being settled, I wrote my letters, and as the clock struck two I sallied forth with my fair companion to take the promised walk. As we passed through the village it was evident a thaw had commenced ; as we advanced towards the higher ground, however, it was as hard as a rock ; and when crossing the fields I affirm that it would have been utterly impossible for a horse to have galloped ; and as for fencing, it was utterly impracticable. As each half hour passed, however, the thaw became more rapid ; in fact, it was the most rapid thaw I ever recollect ; so much so, that ere the short day closed, as we returned home to dinner, the brooks were swollen to their

banks, and the roads were ankle-deep in mud. I consoled myself, nevertheless, with the reflection that at two P. M. hunting was out of the question; and if the hounds had even left their kennel at that hour, with ten miles to travel to the meet, they could scarcely have been thrown into covert before three or after, with scarcely an hour's daylight before them. For all that, I was mistaken, and lost, as did most of the members of the hunt, one of the best runs of the season; in fact, so utterly flabbergasted was I on being told the following day that they had met at two o'clock, found a fox, and had a splendid run, that I determined, frost or snow, sunshine or thaw, never to be thrown out again with a meet so near at hand. A Sunday I have mentioned intervened between this memorable day and that of the hounds meeting at Bowood, the seat of the Marquis of Lansdowne, which was also within nine miles of my then domicile; and the gallant grey having had so long a refresher, I determined to start early, and jog quietly to the battle-field. But fate again ordained otherwise. The Sabbath morning

broke clear and frosty, and as I walked to church the earth had again become hard as adamant. True, the sun's power moistened it about mid-day, but then in the shade it was like paving-stones: and as soon as the glorious rays had sunk behind the western woodlands, the stars shone forth brilliantly, the moon was clear and full; in fact, it was a second edition, revised, of Jack Frost. "It's all up with hunting for the next fortnight, and no mistake," I said to a friend, as we took a brisk turn or two previous to attacking a juicy sirloin, for I have not as yet come to cold mutton on Sundays, in order that my cook may cover her peccadilloes by saying she goes to evening church, when she well knows she attends tea and scandal at Mrs. Culpepper's, or, what is worse, makes love to the gardener in the hothouse. Moreover, I came to the conclusion more readily, inasmuch as I had received a letter that morning, which ran thus:—

"DEAR LINTON,—The Vale swarms with long beeks. We have a merry party in the house, and Popsy is dying to see you. We shall expect you by the express train. I will

send the minibus to meet you at the station. No excuse. If you pass through —, just take in tow a couple of kegs of natives; they are scarce in this neighbourhood of milk and honey.

“Yours ever,

“E. SEATON.”

Fox-hunting! the first of all sports! what then? it freezes—like Russia. Cock shooting vastly agreeable! What, then, should it thaw? Popsy and a snug party, sparkling eyes, blazing fires, fast friends, good cheer, and this in the land of milk and honey! How sweet the thought! And two barrels of natives; speaking forcibly of a little cosy Christmas supper and small talk, half-an-hour before midnight; friends around the hearth—arrangements for sport on the morrow. I pull the bell. Enter Hezekiah—a strange name for a servant, but a true one.

“Hezekiah.”

“Sir.”

“Be up betimes. Should the weather break, prepare The Doctor for the chase, and call me immediately. Should it still freeze, let the hack be in the dog-cart by ten, and

prepare yourself to attend me. I shall go to the West for a week or ten days. Take boots and breeches."

"Yes, Sir."

[Exit Hezekiah.

About eight A.M. on the following morning I was awakened from pleasing dreams of Popsy and Christmas festivities by a knock at my chamber door; and with awakening senses came awaking thoughts.

"Well, Hezekiah, what weather?"

"Its more bitterer than ever, Sir. The cistern is frozen an inch thick."

"Bitterer than ever. Well, then, I'll go: hunting is over till after Christmas, that's certain. Bring my warm water."

Shaving and breakfast over, I started; the whole way to the railway station the ground was frozen hard. I travelled fifty miles westward, and all day it appeared to me to be freezing; the pools were sheeted ice, and under the hedges and woodlands the white frost lingered. Arrived at my friend's house, in a very sheltered warm situation, it appeared to give a little there: yet it froze on again ere nightfall. Indeed, I find, on referring to my journal, that from the 20th

December to the 24th, with the exception of some few intervening hours of thaw, it froze—in fact, almost the only frost that season. What was my astonishment, then, to receive a letter a few days subsequently, stating that, notwithstanding the weather, the hounds had met at Bowood, and had a run—nothing, it is true, to make me regret my absence—still, they had a run. “By St. Hubert!” I exclaimed, on reading the letter at the breakfast-table, with so loud a voice that Popsy poured the tea into a plate of woodcock pie, which I had just prepared for consumption instead of into my cup. “By St. Hubert! there’s a reformation in hunting as times advance, as in all other things—the Church to boot. Skates will henceforth become things unknown, since no frost can shut the kennel-door.” In fact, I could scarcely believe that which I had heard, so I took pen and paper, and wrote to that most obliging and most admirable huntsman, Mr. Long, whose voice has so long cheered the gallant pack of Beaufort to death and victory; and as in his case, like master so like man, he returned me the following

graphic, but most obliging answer to my queries, which I feel assured he will not object to my giving verbatim here.

Badminton, Jan. 10th, 1851.

"SIR,—I will endeavour to give you as fair an account of the two days' sport you enquire about as I can.

"The day we met at Yatton Kennel (Saturday, the 21st) will be admitted by men of sporting 'notoriety,' as a good one; but that at Bowood was, in my humble opinion, not worthy of particular notice. After meeting at Yatton Kennel we threw off at Stanton Park, but in consequence of the severe frost, our field of sportsmen was limited; in fact, only one blue coat, or member of the hunt, was present. The hounds on being thrown into Stanton Park found immediately, ran two short rings, and then raced for Stack Wood, Hullavington, Clapcot, Leigh de la Meer. Here the fox hung for a minute or two, but as soon as he heard my voice he left his kennel, and went away with the hounds on his line for Kingston St. Michael's; then turning to the left, he ran parallel with Kington Langley, right through Draycot Park, Segary Woods, leaving Segary House on the right, down to the Meadows, with Broad Summerford and Dauntsy Mansion on the left, continuing the line of meadows to near Dauntsy Wharf, where it became so dark I stopped the hounds, who otherwise would have tasted blood, for the varmint was well nigh beat.

Owing to the hard frost the hounds were not thrown into covert till near three o'clock.

"The day at Bowood did not afford much sport; the scent was indifferent, the fox ran short, and sportsmen were scarce. I only saw two blue coats in the field. But we were honoured with the presence of the Marquis of Lansdowne and Lord Palmerston. The frost was so severe that Lord Shelburne had left for Bath, thinking it was impossible to hunt. Our chase was through Whetan and Wans to the large coverts of Bowood, where the varmint went to ground.

"Hoping this little account will suffice, I shall be happy to give you any more information in my power.

"I am Sir, your obedient Servant,

"WILLIAM LONG."

Long may you still live, say I, to cheer your merry pack to victory. And so much for scent, even with a frost on the ground; for I am told it was freezing hard both of these two days. And now I must return to the Western lads, and tell of their doings in the field.

CHAPTER VI.

THE merry young sportsmen returned to the house, not however till they had been gratified by the safe arrival of the Jumper, who, led by Thomas, was placed in a stall, perfectly fresh and fit to go; by which time things were looking more cheerful. A bright fire blazed on the dining-room hearth; breakfast was prepared, the sideboard groaning with good substantial cheer; and even the somewhat flamingo-faced butler had contrived—knowing the Squire's peculiarity, or, I should rather say, punctuality on hunting mornings—to rouse himself from a most

agreeable nap, and honour the lower dominions with his portly presence. In fact, as far as I can recollect, he was decidedly the most substantial, if not the most important, person of the Hall or neighbourhood—*et pourquoi non?* Excuse a French term, for he was certainly most useful in his special department; added to which, he brewed, without exception, the best ale I ever tasted: and if-so-be it precisely suited his own palate—what then? all the country round pronounced it undeniable. Stogumber beer was, or rather is, mere wish-wash in comparison, though vastly agreeable; and White's Taunton ale alone could bear it any comparison. His name was Mr. Hind—not an inappropriate one—and few had the audacity to drop the Mr., of which distinction he was very tenacious himself. Notwithstanding, he had many good qualities; one of the best in my eyes, his extreme care and attention on all occasions to my mother and Gussy, in the latter of whom he took a positive pride: add to this, he was an ad-

mirable tempered servant. As we entered the breakfast-room Arty seized the poker and gave a good stir to the already blazing fire, while I threw myself into an easy arm chair to rest my legs; for, as I said before, the boots were a trifle tight about the calves, and I longed to find myself mounted. At the moment, therefore, I did not observe the broad back of him I have been naming, who stood—having seen to the proper arrangement of the sideboard—looking out of the window into the park. He soon turned towards us, however, and with a beaming face declared that, in his idea, we were turned out to perfection; and he doubted not but one or the other of us would bring home the brush. “But recollect, Master Fred,” he added, “if you are going to ride that brute of Barleycorn’s, beware; for I heard say below he was about the most rampaginous puller with a pack of hounds before him as ever came into the country. He will scarcely feel your weight on his back; and if you are not careful, be assured

you may go out on his back, but you will come home on a hurdle, that's all; for Thomas says he's got a mouth like a rhinoceros, and a jaw-bone like that of Samson's ass. Now we brewed this year a brew which has quite outbrewed all: the Squire tasted it: and decided that a hogshead should be kept till your brother comes of age, and I wish you to be in at the death of that as well as the fox. So pray, sir, be careful; for I know that you and Master Arty are audacious spirits on horseback. But here comes Miss Gussy, looking for all the world like 'Dinah;'* so I'll just send up the urn, and inform master that breakfast is on table."

"Do so; for time flies—*tempus fugit*, as we classics say. Well, Gussy! you do look splenda-c-i-o-u-s! No, no; that's not the word for you—simple and charming. By Jove! a new habit. Who suffered; eh?"

"Suffered, Fred? what do you mean?"

"Why, suffered!—paid for it—or is to

* Doubtless he meant Diana.





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pay—or wont be paid—yet expects, and ought to be paid. That's what we mean by suffering for a habit, or a coat, or a pair of tops, or what-not; but in your case all's right, doubtless—you're not an Etonian, but mammy's Popsy darling! So turn round. Capital colour—dark and lady-like, and plain and well made. There, pet; you look the thing!"

"Have done, Fred! do go along with those rude tricks."

"Well, your habit is really perfection, though you pronounce my tricks bad ones. So, who gave it you? and who made it for you? 'Pon my life, if you were a year or two older, you and Brilliant would set the field agog!"

"Nonsense. Aunt Mary gave it me; and you well know how particular she is as regards all I wear; and I believe it was made by the celebrated 'Moses.'"

"Oh, ay! Aaron to Moses, with something about noses." But this young sweet girl certainly did look like a sylph that fair

hunting morning ; her slight, almost childish figure was well set off by her beautifully made riding habit, which, as she held it up to pass across the room, displayed the most perfect little feet—not disfigured, as is the fashion of the day, in horrid vulgar boots, tipped with glazed leather, as worn by all the hair-dressers' daughters in the land, believing it to be the "fashion," odious word—but in a good, proper, well-fitting pair of double-soled boots, or what are termed clump-soled, so that she could put her foot on the ground, even in a fallow field, without fear of being laid up with influenza for a fortnight after returning home. Moreover, the horrid disfigurement of flaps, or curtains, or stern-sheets, to ladies' habits, had not then been discovered, for the benefit of tailors and clothiers, to the utter destruction of a graceful figure: and nice plain hats were still worn, instead of the horrid deformities with rosettes—not that a graceful Spanish hat would not be a great improvement, with a flowing plume. In fact, a plain black "wide-awake"—barring

the name—with a drooping feather, is by no means ungraceful. But Gussy sat down, and pushed aside her flowing golden curls as the dear old dad entered, looking the very beau ideal of an English gentleman and a sportsman. He kissed his darling daughter, and saluted his boys, adding, “Well, lads! the day’s fair and mild: if we find a fox in Stanton Gorse, I fancy the first in the field must be well mounted and know how to ride. I shall take Thomas; for I am quite up to a gallop myself. So recollect, Gussy, when we find, you will ride quietly home: your mother’s wishes are imperative on this head.”

“And they shall be obeyed, dear dad; but I long to see the starting of the Jumper, as the boys term him, and Silvertail.”

No sooner was breakfast over than the horses came round. Brilliant, a dark brown horse, beautifully marked, of considerable power and admirable condition, as temperate as his action was perfect, with his beautiful head erect, and full well-placed tail, stepped proudly forth as if conscious of the precious

burden, light as a feather, he was about to carry. But the Squire was not of the order of sportsmen to permit his daughter to ride a bang tailed weed, though boasting the blood of Eclipse; and having assisted her to mount, he patted the neck of the noble animal, giving Bradly, who held the rein, much praise for his admirable condition. "Yes, sir, I like the horses in my establishment to have coats like Satan" (meaning, doubtless, "satin"). "And great the trouble and labour I have to get them so." "Yes," added Arty, on one side, "the trouble of welting, as you term it, the unfortunate stable lads." The squire was soon safe on Corbeau, one of the most noble black hunters I ever beheld, and they rode away side by side. It would have been difficult, even throughout the length and breadth of merrie England to have witnessed two more perfect animals of their kind, or two more appropriate riders. Then came Silvertail, on whose back my laughter-loving brother soon popped, getting one of the lads to give him a leg. And then to shew my knowledge of

horse-flesh, having run my hand from the knee to pastern of the Jumper, and found his legs, as are those of ninety out of a hundred of all English horses, as round as a rolling-pin, I did the same. The moment I had placed my feet in the stirrups, however, he lashed out most furiously; but Bradly cried out, "It's only his spirit, sir—the horse is fresh." Nothing daunted, we trotted after the leading file, followed by Thomas.

It was a happy joyous ride to covert on that fair morning even of Christmas time, and the very birds appeared to join in our merriment as they carolled forth the last notes of the year ere their little throats, like the springs, were frozen up by the rigours of winter. As we approached the appointed place of meeting, the squire drew in Corbeau, who had been jogging along somewhat briskly, in order to give Gussy a canter, and said, "Now, boys, recollect, no larking—no jumping to show off your pluck—no riding before the hounds have found, or over them. I don't ask you to follow your father, though

I know the country well ; and he must be well mounted who can pound old Corbeau. Wait till the hounds have settled well on their fox, and then go as straight as may be, and catch them if you can. No shirking bye-lanes, no jumping stiff gates, with a light fence on each side. Spare your nags when you can ; but if there is no way for it but a brook or stiff timber, then face it like men. A horse is a good judge, far better than people imagine as to whether his rider has or has not his heart in the right place. So now forward, Gus, for I see the hounds coming over the common."

Gentlemen sportsmen and sporting gentlemen of merrie England, I greet you. Put on your leathers, top-boots, and spurs, white, well polished, and bright as may be ; the coats belonging to your several hunts, if you do so belong to hunts—if not, the gallant scarlet, or, as may be, your dark Oxford grey ; on your heads well-brushed hats ; on your hands well-fitting and well-washed buckskin gloves. For the nonce, leave at home your chains and your studs, and your out-

landish shaped hunting caps, like the head-piece of the Sikh commander ; doubtless very appropriate to prevent the burning suns of India from penetrating warriors' pates, and by no means inappropriate for huntsmen and whips, if only to distinguish them from the field, far more so to guard them from the branches of trees, they having continually to enter dense coverts. Leave also your waistcoats, with innumerable pockets, and your unsightly-looking knee-cords ; in fact, all those modern innovations of dress which make men look like mountebanks instead of sportsmen. For my part, though perhaps I am wrong, I see no men who look so much like sportsmen and gentlemen as do the members of the Beaufort Hunt, and there are among them men who are mounted as well, and can ride side by side in any county with any hounds in England. Their costume is top-boots and leathers, a blue coat lined with buff, buckskin gloves, and a hat. What does a gentleman require more ? The blue coats are distinguished in the field among the red, and generally speaking in the van. Eccen-

tricity of costume, caps, cords, chains, and twenty-pocketed waistcoats, will not suffice to carry men over brooks, gates, and walls. So, for this day, leave them at home, and join the Westerns at the meet.

On a fine open knoll or common land, looking south-west, behold the assembled pack, and a field of more than one hundred horsemen, I was about to say—but no, it was the Christmas holidays, and many ponies had gathered there also, some of which, with their young riders, greatly distinguished themselves, and, if I fail not in memory, there were several asses also. Behind this knoll ran a somewhat long belt of fir trees—protecting, as it were, the hill side from the keen north and north-easterly blasts; while in front, some two or three hundred yards from the spot where the hounds were placed, a large thick covert of gorse covered the whole side of the slope. It generally held two or three foxes, and was reckoned a sure find. On this gorse the sun shone brightly, and in fact it was a well chosen snug retreat for master reynard, the more so as imme-

diately below it a rich luxuriant vale extended for mile on mile towards the Severn, dotted over with numerous farm houses, to whose poultry yards and pigeon houses they paid alternately their devoirs. On the left, also, about three miles distant, stood the handsome residence of Lord Delamere, a millionaire and a game preserver of the common order; for all that, he was rather a friend than an enemy to fox hunters, for no doubt the varmints found the flavour of his pheasants vastly agreeable, and his rabbits were abundant; whether his keepers attended to his instructions or not, imperative orders were given not to destroy foxes, and one was generally found in his coverts. So much for the battle field, as far as it goes; now for the army, and then the charge. The Earl rode up to our party on a good powerful bay hunter, one of his own stamp, and there are few better, and thus accosted us—"How are you, Western? and Miss Gussy? Charmed to see you in the hunting field! 'Pon my word Corbeau and Brilliant look as well as their riders. And the boys home from Eton?

Glad to see you, lads! But, halloa! Fred, where did you pick up that piece of blood? It's not the Brookland stamp, I fancy."

"No, no," said the governor, "no horse of mine. Farmer Barleycorn very kindly lent the nag for Fred to try him, though I fancy he is not precisely fitted to join my stud. However, we shall see if he can go, for I imagine you intend to give us a run."

"And if you do, my Lud," chimed in Barleycorn, who came forward, "and Master Fred lets un go, there's not a harse in the field can beat him." "Ah, Barleycorn!" added the Earl, "glad to see you in the field, and with such a good stud. You must be doing well, notwithstanding the times; and your looks by no means belie my words."

"Why, thank'ee, my Lud, we do manage to jog on; and if corn is low, horses' feed is low also." "Well, I always like to see the yeomen of England in the hunting field. So now, gentlemen," he added, taking out his watch, "time's up, and we shall soon see if the gorse holds a fox." Then, turning to Gussy, he pointed out, about two miles dis-

tant below us, a winding brook which crossed the vale, and recommended her to ride quietly up and down the line of plantation. "If the fox breaks across the vale, you will see the best of the run, dear lady; at all events none of the mishaps at the brook, and there will be many, will escape you. Probably, Master Fred, or Arty, may number among the unlucky; for Jumper, as he terms that huge-legged chesnut, in my opinion is a questionable brook jumper. If we break to the east, towards Delamere Woods, then ride to the east end of the covert, and tell Thomas to skirt the hills, and you may possibly see the end of it." "Papa insists on my not following the hounds," replied Gussy. "Not necessary to follow them if you do as I tell you. Never mind papa in the hunting field; he is as keen as his own boys. So, good-bye, Gussy—your horse is perfection. Now then, Phillips, yoiks into the gorse." Phillips touched his cap, and rode forward with the gallant pack at his heels, their coats actually shining in the morning sun, and their condition admirable; and in two minutes every

hound, at the sound of his voice, dashed into the gorse like a charge of cavalry. Now turn for a moment, and contemplate the field, recollecting the period was a few days before Christmas. All the boys in England were at home for the holidays, save those poor fellows who had no homes to go home to; all the boys in England, with few exceptions, are fond of fox-hunting. Therefore, might be seen many lads on various ponies, good, bad, and indifferent. Then, be it recollected, that it was a season when all the clerks of counting-houses and all sorts of houses, and others, become insuperably idle, and desire to have what is termed a spree; and they fancy that galloping a poor hired hackney over two or three fields, and then tumbling off in the mud, is hunting; and after catching their horse, and riding home again, they relate their exploits to Anna Maria, the milliner or shop girl with plastered hair *à la* Madonna, and glazed shoes, whom they assure, on the following Sunday afternoon, that they rode over six gates and two brooks, side by side with the Duke or his Lordship,

and that their 'ors was an out-and-outer; and the poor girl turns her eyes up, and after admiring his fashionable tie, believes, as rightly she should, that he is a hero. Then there are two or three sporting doctors, who go the first twenty minutes like birds, and coming to a brief check, within hail of a patient, take advantage of that check to feel his pulse, and charge him an extra five shillings for coming so far to see him, to say nothing of medicine promised to be sent. Well, I, for one, grudge them not their trifle of sport or their earnings, which are ill paid and hardly laboured for. Some of them, if well mounted, manage to do this little bit of professional, and then hit off the hounds again before the finish, if so be it has not been a teaser. And then come the red coats, and the cords, and the caps, and the yeomen stout and bold, and many well mounted, and the red coats with leathers and hats; and the parsons, generally speaking, men who, having ridden a "steeple-chase," can ride in a fast run; and lastly the flower of the hunt, with a few stranger

officers on leave or from neighbouring quarters, with a sprinkling of blue coats from the Duke of Gloucestershire's. In fact, the field that gathered for the chase on that fair morning numbered well nigh two hundred. Recollect, also, the meet was within reach of one large city, even for men who rode hacks which they called hunters, and sufficiently near to another for men who rode hacks to covert, and then exchanged them for hunters. How they all fared at the end of that memorable day it would be in vain for me to attempt to describe, or how they went in the run, for I saw them not. My memory reverts solely to my father on Corbeau, Barleycorn, who was no flincher in the field, and who, moreover, was most anxious to witness the prowess of Arty on Silvertail and myself on the Jumper, and I watched them keenly as far as possible throughout the run, and even years afterwards recollect every incident of the chase, so far as they were concerned; so shall I give it here.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RUN.

GIRTHS were tightened, for many were there who would have tightened them even were they already in the last hole, solely that other persons did so, and they heard it was a sporting custom; others cast away the ends of their cigars, while a few lit fresh ones out of bravado—but then they came to smoke probably cabbage leaves, not to ride to hounds. But hark to the melodious voice of Violet, a beautiful mottled bitch; Violet, one of the pride of a pack then, as now, one of the first, if not the first, in

England, tells a joyous tale. "Hark to Violet!" echoed again and again the full voice of the huntsman, who, standing up in his stirrups, eagerly cheered on his pets. But their leader's voice was scarcely wanting with such a pack as that; Violet's note was enough. The whole pack were on the scent like lightning; in one instant the gorse was alive with quivering sterns and melodious voices; in two minutes more a large dog-fox emerged from the valley side, faced deliberately the whole field with a look of contempt, then turning, laid himself out, was over the first fence in a jiffy, and straight through the centre of that glorious vale direct towards the brook. Readers, oblige me by recollecting that at that period I was a boy fifteen years and a few months old; enthusiastically fond of hunting; mad about hounds; a boy that had never seen a pack of hounds before, save on a pony; never such a scene as that; and mounted on a horse that I had been told was a first-rate hunter.

On the right of my sister Gussy sat my dear old father quietly on his horse, yet

watching with a face bright from enthusiasm and delight the working of the hounds; a short distance beyond was the noble Earl, the master of the pack—but they neither uttered a word; while on his left I was controlling the Jumper, who was giving proofs of his not being “as gentle as a lamb.” Behind us were Arty and Barleycorn, with many others well mounted. The moment, however, Violet spoke, dad turned to Gussy, and said, “Now, dear, let Thomas guide you towards the plantations before this heterogeneous crowd make a charge, which they will in two minutes. Here, Thomas, take care of Miss Gussy.” At that moment the whole pack had joined the hound which spoke; and I literally felt a choking sensation rise in my throat, not from fear, but extreme excitement—an excitement which those who can read the human face would have said existed in many an older breast than mine. The Earl took out his watch, again replaced it, buttoned his coat closer, and, turning to my father, said, “Violet, you know, never tells lies. The scent appears

to be good. If he breaks away towards the vale, your boys will have their wishes gratified." At this moment every voice in the field appeared to be joined in one wild halloo. Every hound rushed from the gorse, while the Earl, pushing down his hat, went off at a gallop. I can, in these after days, only compare the whole scene to the last charge of Waterloo; and the Earl pushing his hat on, as the Duke pushing in his telescope, and exclaiming, "Up, guards, and at them!" a tear of positive excitement ran down my face, as clearing the first fence in his stride, the Jumper carried me in the front rank of that tremendous rush. The first four or five fields were all grass, and of some extent, with light fences, and the greater portion of the field, even the men on hacks and the ponies, appeared to go along. On my right I saw my father on Corbeau, taking every thing coolly; on my left Arty was sailing away on Silvertail, who knew his business; and close by his side rode Barleycorn, in the full enjoyment of the chase. The hounds were racing mute with a burning scent, and

the Jumper, with my light weight on his back, pulling my arms off. Nevertheless, he was evidently a fast horse, and took all in his stride; in fact, I almost led the field. As we came to the sixth enclosure, however, a large stubble, my dad came up to me, saying, "Now, then, Fred, a wall's before us; so keep your horse well together. Do not be in a hurry, and we shall shake off the crowd." True enough; there was a wall, at least four and a half feet high, built of loose stones, and no time to select an easy place. It was the first I had ever encountered; but my spirit was up, and at it we went. Corbeau cleared it as a matter of course, and over went the Jumper after him, without touching a stone. "Bravo, Fred!" exclaimed the Squire—"Bravo, boy!" My heart beat with pride, and I turned to the left and beheld Barleycorn in the air, with uplifted whip, which, coming on the flank of the Jumper, sent him flying into the next field some yards. Silvertail cleared it also splendidly. And, true enough, the throng already began to diminish. Here and there a blue

and a red coat cleared it cleverly, while others awaited till a foot or two had been knocked off the top, while many refusing it altogether, looked out for a lane or a road, and never saw a hound for the remainder of the day. Here we turned a little to the left, over some slight fences, when I heard some of the leading men say, "By Jove! he has skirted the brook, and is making head for the Delamere Coverts." But, no—luckily, no. Every hound is across the water, and, with increasing pace, gaining on their prey. We cross a ditch and a bank. Corbeau clears an awkward stile standing. Barley-corn comes up as I take a pull at the Jumper, and says, "Well done, Master Fred, I told you he was a rare 'harse.' Put him straight at the brook, and, bedad, you'll beat the field." One hundred yards below us, we were then going three parts speed, the winding stream appeared, the water of which was swollen from recent rains, and from bank to bank, in some parts rotten, it was at least eighteen feet. Here my dad, who was a trifle in advance, took no notice of any one,

but, going straight at it, cleared it in a bound, and followed the hounds, as if determined not to save us from drowning. Must I own that my heart beat quick? But I had not the slightest intention of turning; indeed, had I so wished, it was impracticable; for, true to the words of the butler, I might as well have pulled at a rhinoceros—go he would; so I touched him with the spur to increase the velocity of the pace. Whether this offended him or not, who can say? Three persons—I fancy they were the huntsman, my dad, and a red coat—had already landed safely, so at it I went; but, alas! the Jumper failed me. The moment he came to the water's edge, he stopped short, and well nigh precipitated me over his head into the rushing waters. Fancy my mortification at this moment, when I beheld Silvertail fly it like a bird, with my younger fraternity grinning on his back; indeed, I fancy he literally put his finger to his nose as, without halting for an instant, he followed in the wake of Corbeau. I had, however, one slight consolation—Barleycorn, who had stuck to

my quarters in order to see his horse fly the brook, had thus prevented his own horse from jumping, and for half a second we remained alone in our glory; the next we turned our horses resolutely and charged it again. It was evident, however, that the Jumper was no brook jumper, for on this occasion he went right into the middle, and well nigh drowned me in a shower bath. Luckily, however, he had selected a place with a good bottom; and at this very moment one of the Beaufort hunt, whose name, if I recollect aright, was Baily, and who had joined the meet as we were crossing the second field, flew the brook close by me, and, halting for an instant on the opposite bank, most goodnaturedly—for he was a first-rate rider, and the hounds were still running their best—cried, “Bravo, young fellow! Steer him down the stream a yard or two. See, there is a place to get out.” I did so at once, and, ere he was off again, was on the opposite side. On looking round for a moment for Barleycorn, I saw his horse had cleared the water; but he was a

heavy man, who, though a bold rider, had no firm seat. Had he kept his arm and whip steady, and had a light hand on his rein, all would have gone well, as it was the horse slipped with his hind legs, and, although the rider gained the bank, the horse fell back into the brook; but he had not lost the rein, and soon dragged him out.

Away we went again, and now with renewed confidence. The brook cleared, I put out the Jumper to speed. The fences were again light; and ere half-a-dozen enclosures were passed, once more I caught my father. "Bravo, my lads!" he again said. "This is glorious. Come along!" The field was now diminished to one-sixth of the number that had started. A dozen or so cleared the brook; another dozen managed to ford it. To the ponies it was impracticable; to the remainder, brook-jumping, as to their horses, was a thing unknown. The few that remained, however, were going well; the hounds still running mute, without a check; and the gallant fox keeping the vale, not deigning to make for the large coverts on

Rackham, on his right. The time was already five-and-twenty minutes; the pack gaining ground every field. "He's away straight for Upcot," said a heavy man, on a splendid horse; "and, if so, few will see the end, at this pace." Thence we passed near the little hamlet of Blagdon, and beheld the rector and his daughters standing on their well-kept lawn, in evident fear that we should ride over their flower-beds; and on, through a small outlying covert belonging to Brooklands. Here he hung for a minute, but, disdaining the large coverts beyond, still held his course direct for the Upcot earths. "By Jove!" said Phillips, cheering on his hounds, "he can never get so far, at this pace."

Down a slight declivity we raced, Silvertail and Corbeau still going as if they could go for ever—such was the condition of the Western stud in those truly happy days—while Barleycorn, somewhat splashed, like myself, with a beaming face joined us; the Jumper still pulling—in fact, the veins of my arms were almost bursting. At this

moment we approached a fence, which I have ever considered the worst of all others to encounter with hounds running fast, still more so to one riding such a pull-devil. It was a blind, awkward bank and hedge, leading into a deep, muddy, ruddy cart-lane, with an equally blind fence on the other side, or, for choice, a stiff gate. Corbeau and Silvertail dropped into this, as a matter of course—one with his light weight, the other with his heavy—and popped out of it again, over the opposite one. Immediately before me there was a gentleman who had been one of the leaders of the field throughout the day. He halted for an instant; and, in my boyish ardour, I fancied he did not like it; but the hounds were only two fields ahead, and hold my horse I could not; so I bawled out, “Go along, Sir, or let me go.” “Wait a second, young gentleman,” he replied, “without you wish me to jump on one of the finest hounds in the pack;” and then, horse and all, he disappeared into the lane. It was, indeed, an awkward fence; but the Jumper would have it, and forward, like a steam-engine,

he rushed, with such impetus, that it literally carried him half over the lane, to the next fence, where he stumbled, and pitched on his head, sending me well-nigh on his ears ; but I luckily recovered my seat in time to see Barleycorn also cross safely into the lane, but on turning sharply—probably to take the gate—his horse tripped and fell ; and I left him floundering in the mud. As I galloped along the next field, I saw a horse running loose, and a man running after him—the most absurd of all things, to behold a man in top-boots, in a ploughed field trying to catch a horse. “Stop him !” he cried—“stop him !” but I was trying to catch a pack of hounds running into their sinking fox—it was scarcely to be supposed I could stop to catch his horse ; most men are selfish at such moments. Onward we sped. The gentleman who had kindly showed me the way out of the brook, and a light man with moustaches, were leading ; then came the huntsman and one of the whips, a blue-coat and two red, a parson, Silvertail, Corbeau, a neighbouring miller, and your humble ser-

vant. The field, in fact, was reduced to a dozen, who were still going well. The Earl, on a second horse, was not even in the front rank. The last shot of the gallant fox was nearly fired. Nearer and nearer we approached the Upcot coverts. More enthusiastically Phillips cheered his gallant pack; indeed, I fancied he would have thrown himself from his horse to catch the fox himself, so fearful was he that he would escape. But no — his doom was sealed. "Forward, forward!" screeched the huntsman. "Yonder he creeps, dead beat, up the side of that hedgerow. We have him. Forward, beauties! there is still a mile to Upcot." And he cleared a strong fence, cheering on his hounds. While staring for the fox, I took no thought of the ground over which I was riding; and the Jumper, putting his foot into a grip, came down heavily in a turnip-field, and gave me an awkward roll. I held on, however, manfully by the bridle, and we were soon both up and on again; and from that day to this I have not ceased to blame the Jumper that I did not see the first

hound lay hold of that gallant fox. As it was, there were only seven men in at the death before the Jumper; and Phillips just held the varmint aloft as I entered the field.

There stood Corbeau, and my beloved dad with his arm on his neck, the gallant animal looking as if he had only done his duty, and was prepared to do it again, while the face of that best of men beamed with delight, as he first looked at Arty, who still sat on Silvertail, whose silver tail scarce wagged, and then, as I came up, taking my hand, he said, "Bravo, my gallant boy! few would have seen such a run as this on such a horse." At this moment, Barleycorn and a blue-coat also joined us. "By dad, Sir, that's what I call foxhunting!" he exclaimed; while Phillips, pulling out his watch, added, "Just fifty-two minutes without a check, from find to kill, with Low Bottom Brook in the bargain."

"The best run of the season," exclaimed the Earl, delighted with the performance of his hounds. "Here, Fred Western, you

shall have the brush for your ducking. Never lad rode better. Give Arty the Jumper next time."

"I'll wager a stack of beans to a crown, my lord, Master Fred clears the brook on Jumper, any day, without his spurs."

All the field laughed, in which Barleycorn good-humouredly joined. "And now, gentlemen," said the master of the pack, "are you satisfied? or shall we try for another fox?"

In truth, few of us were so; but the horses said "Enough," and the meet on the Monday was a good one, so "Home!" was the order. The hounds jogged on with Phillips at their head, for a mile on our line to Brooklands. Here, bidding "Good-day" to the Earl, we trotted homewards, with a half promise from our Dad that we should attend the meet on Monday.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON approaching the Old Hall—the home of youth's happy days, the spot for ever engraven on the heart in memory of other times, when the cares of life—such as they were—passed as an April shower, leaving not a cloud lingering on the horizon, we were welcomed by the merry voice of the laughter-loving Gussy, who, having removed her hat and habit, now all radiant in health and smiles from her morning's ride, and its exciting amusements, rushed out on the steps of the entrance to meet us.

“ I saw you, brother mine,” she exclaimed,

addressing me, "floundering in the brook, with the Jumper and Farmer Barleycorn."

"Did you?" I replied, in no good humour; "and what then, most precious Popsy? Did Mademoiselle Wilson tell you no other eyes could see so far as thine; no brain imagine aught of wonders like those which fill your little head; no mouth, utter such truisms?"

"No; but I thought you would be drowned, you ill-tempered boy, and I begged Thomas to ride with me to your help."

"You did, did you, Miss Precious? and what said Thomas?"

"Why, he said he should not wonder; but it was to be hoped, in such case, that Barleycorn would be drowned with you, for lending you such an animal—adding that he could not disobey orders, whatever the consequence, and Papa had 'desired I should not follow the hounds. The chase is the chase, do you see, Miss? Many a good man gets half-drowned at times: some break their legs; some their arms; but they generally recover to hunt again! It is exciting, as you see, Miss. What is, is to be. There

goes Squire Oatfield, into a muddy ditch, and Captain Slapbang smashing a gate, do you see, Miss?"

"Good advice and true, Gussy, my darling! Thomas is a filosefer, as Bradly terms it: but if you saw me half-drowned, you saw me get out of the brook again; and if your little eyes can see half so far as the dear Wilson would desire us to believe, why you would have seen to the end of the run. Here is the brush! as proud a trophy as a French eagle."

"Well, Sir Impudence, I am glad you have brought home something in memory of this pleasant day. But how was it that you obtained it, instead of Arty? for he cleared the brook at the same time as papa on Corbeau, and was away before you?"

"Why, you little simpleton! The first horse that starts does not always win the race. Add this—the lad that

Mounts Barleycorn's Jumper, and gets to the end of a chase,

Must have a bold heart, light hand, and firm seat, to ride him whatever the pace."

And thus good humouredly joking in the full enjoyment of the past, and hoping for the future, we entered the house.

Then came the Sabbath—a day religiously kept at the Old Hall; but as unlike the Sabbaths of the present day in the country, or anywhere else that I know of, as are persons and things from the olden time: and while, after the lapse of years, I write these pages from my lamented friend's early memoranda—I who voted for the Reform Bill — I that have gloried in free-trade, inasmuch that my heart has ever told me that the gifts of the Almighty ought freely to be exchanged from one end of the world to the other: and more, that I would desire to see the million live rather than the thousand luxuriate — confess that, while many things are changed for the better, the reform most of all required, in the hearts of our teachers, has rather merged into a spiritual warfare, terminating in a paradox of religious controversy, maddening to some, and a senseless impossibility to others. In the days when I was young, and knew little

of the cares of life, save the want of a mount on hunting days, and a fair wind on fishing days, the prelate of Exeter was not, and Rome remained at Rome. So, forsooth, the admirable Christian pastor of Brooklands preached his simple sermon twice on each returning Sunday—once more than then was usual in rural districts—and was listened to and loved by a large and respectable congregation. He did more—he gave a third of his income among the poor of his extensive parish, without ostentation or a hope of thanks : he sought his reward from Him who never deceives. “Fear God and love your neighbour as yourself,” was the lesson he taught, and much more—but this is not the place to dwell on it. He abused neither Pope nor Mahometan ; he quarrelled neither with Independent nor Wesleyan ; but he practised what he preached, and in the end gained a victory with his sword still in the scabbard, and with words dictated from the heart. Such was the man from whose lips I first heard the Gospel preached. Regularly as the Sabbath morning arrived, no

sooner breakfast over than, if the weather was wet, the old coach came to the door; and into it we bundled—not, however, till Gussy had received various instructions from the *chère* Wilson, at which—for boys will be boys—we made our remarks, and had our laughter. “Gussy, my love, wrap your shawl closer around you; the air is keen”—or I should rather say, cloak, as it might have been—“darling! I hope you have thick boots on; the ground is damp”—and so forth. At which commands, one brother proposed a stove should be placed at the bottom of the coach; while the other suggested the cushions should be aired with a warming-pan, our Dad all the time hugging his Popsy closer, and attempting to be serious; but, nevertheless, in all heart entering into our frolic.

At the church, Mr. Western always met with truthful and hearty respect; we behaved, as who would not, who listened to our excellent pastor? for truly was he not a preacher of the present era—all theatrical mystification, mis-termed Evangelicism—but

a Christian, large-hearted charitable man, who spoke by word of mouth precisely that which he performed in every-day life—a man abounding in benevolence, who acted towards others as he desired they should act towards him, and loved his neighbour as himself. What then? there was not a man in all the country round who could cast a fly as he could. There had not in earlier days been one who could beat him in a fast run, however stiff the country. He had renounced fishing, not, as he once truly observed, that he saw aught objectionable—far less sinful—in so simple and rural an amusement; but there were others in his parish—absurd as it might be—who did so, or at least fancied that he to whom they listened from the pulpit each Sabbath should not be seen walking along the flower-bedecked meads, granted to man by God, with a fishing-rod in hand. So, in deference to them, he renounced the sport in which he delighted, and all the tackle and flies of this best of fishermen were one day sent down to the Old Hall at home, as a present to us boys.

On our good father remonstrating as to his giving way to such absurd wishes from a few old village maidens, he thus calmly replied—

“My dear Mr. Western, it is not for me to argue the right or wrong of such trifles. There are some, doubtless, who, knowing me, would judge me not harshly that, rod in hand, I passed an hour in the evening by your streamlet’s side. There are others, who would not think at all about the matter. While the few imagine the duties of a clergyman are merely those of writing a sermon six days a week in high-flown popular language, and preaching it in a theatrical tone on the seventh. The first-named I love and respect, as they, knowing and rightly judging, respect me; the second scarcely less; the third it is my duty to endeavour to join to the first and second. What then if I give up a trifling amusement, and am so great a gainer? ’Tis the same as regards hunting: I am an enthusiastic sportsman. You have seen me ride to hounds! All I thought of was the excitement of the chase,

the air, and exercise—the glorious pastime under the canopy of God's heaven in this fine country. And I always returned home with a heart yearning in good-will towards my fellowmen, and happy in myself.”

“But as regards the fishing,” said the Squire; “surely none can find fault with you, that having laboured in your parish all the morning, you pass your evenings in company with Izaak Walton!”

“No, my dear sir, the practice is as innocent as is the recreation charming: it is the example of idleness, if you will, that forms alone the sin—if sin there be. Moreover, if there be one among my twelve hundred parishioners who objects, better to give way to his objections than have one enemy.”

So spoke this good Parson, the best of Christians, and most amiable of men, subsequently our well-beloved tutor, I have named him here simply as an actor on the theatre of our earlier days, inasmuch as I speak of the youthful inmates of the Old Hall at home.

It was on a dull December evening of the Sabbath following the day of our merry

hunting party, that having sent home Gussy, and her well-beloved *gouvernante* in the family-coach after afternoon church, the weather being dry, bright, and cold, our kind-hearted Father persuaded Mr. Barton, the rector, to walk home and dine with us at the Hall. As we awaited his joining us without the church-yard wall, a young sporting farmer, to whom we were well known, a tenant on the Western property, approached us; and beckoning Arty on one side, exclaimed—

“Does Master Fred know the Duke of Gloucestershire’s hounds be to meet at Allington Gos on Thursday?”

“At Allington Gorse—no,” said I, “Ploughshare, where is it? How far? Good meet? Were you out yesterday?—such a run, enough to make your hair stand on end!”

“There’s a go, sir!” he replied; “out yesterday!—not know where Allington Gos is! Sure I was, and I seed you both going like greyhounds; and I went too, sure-a-ly, till we got over the brook: but somehow or

another, my grey mare Harry Longlegs—a bad 'un to beat most times, and first-rate timber-jumper—managed, as things will be on occasions, to hit a low stile hard with her fore-legs, and at the same time I hit my head hard in the next ploughed field. Sure-a-ly, my hair did stand on end! I thought my neck were a-broke; but I recovered, and here I am, all right and tight for Allington Gos! Not know it!—one of the duke's best meets, a matter of sixteen miles only from the Hall: so pray come, young gentlemen—and have a go."

"Won't we? that's all, Ploughshare! so good afternoon."

And we ran after the Squire and the Rector, who had walked briskly towards the Hall.

"Well, boys!" exclaimed the former, as we came up, out of breath, "what says young Farmer Ploughshare? Was corn up or down at yesterday's market? Has he a colt to sell? or a match for the Jumper to lend you.—eh, Fred?" seizing me by the ear.

“Neither, dad; but he says the duke’s hounds meet at Allington Gorse on Thursday; and Long is never in such pluck as when he sees Squire Western mounted on Corbeau, and his boys at the covert-side!”

This, as may be readily supposed, produced a burst of laughter, in which his Reverence joined with much good will; and although the subject dropped as we now approached the Hall, the ice was broken, and we took advantage of his presence, after the well-hung and tender sirloin had been fully discussed, and the woodcock which followed pronounced excellent, and washed down by a bottle of claret, such as with reason we can say is rarely met with in these days, save that the price is now as the flavour somewhat lower than of old. All hearts warmed and appetites satisfied, the ladies retired, my father placed himself in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, and saw Mr. Barton fairly ensconced in the other, leaving us lads to pass the wine; so that, after some conversation in reference to poor-rates and parish affairs, Susan Bradley’s engagement

with the young squire of Brandfield, and the capture of a notorious poacher at Arlington, Allington Gorse became again the subject of discussion.

"Arlington," said Fred, "is that near Allington?"

"No, my boy," replied Mr. Barton, "quite in another direction."

"How then do you reach the latter from hence?" said Arty.

"Why, forsooth," added his Reverence, "I should say Wickham, Badminton, Upper Coombe, then by Alton kennel, taking the high road for Chippendale. But Ploughshare doubtless knows it well: trust to him: the meet is a good one. I wish I could join you there."

"And why not?" said the Squire. "What's the sin in riding across the country on a fine fresh morning of Christmas-time? Come, Barton, I will mount you—more, I will give you absolution!"

"No, no, it must not be! I have given up the chase: do not tempt me. But these lads are right ready for the fray, so give

them another joyous day, and they shall bring me a faithful account of the sport on their return."

"Well!" said the kind old Squire, "this is indulgence indeed; however, we shall see, Barton—we shall see! The distance is long, and the days at their shortest, and my stable is short of horses: still, I should like to see the Duke and the hounds again: there is not a more courteous gentleman or a better pack in this country—in fact, I know no more pleasant pack to hunt with in all England. So good-night! Barton, good-night! I wish you would mount the pepper-and-salt cut-away, and show us the way. And now, boys, to bed—it's getting late!"

CHAPTER IX.

"I'M stagnated!" said Arty, as we mounted to our sleeping apartments: and with this he stood on his head in the centre of the room, and cried "Tally-ho!" Which of my readers can do the same? I assisted him to alight on his feet again, and we then held a cabinet-council as to our chance of attending the meet at Allington.

"When I arose this morning," said Arty, with one leg out of his trowsers, the other in—"when I arose this morning," he continued with a droll tone of voice, "it was not my good fortune to be acquainted with a spot called Allington; but Ploughshare—

thanks to the good yeoman — enlightened me ; and you, dear Fred, on the very correct principle of sharing good fortune with your friends, informed our well-beloved parent that the hounds would meet there on Thursday next, with the intention of finding, chasing, and, if so be they can, killing a fox. Be assured, we shall be there to witness the transaction, as commercial gentlemen have it, for the wind is blowing in the right quarter."

"True, *jeune amis* !" replied I, who had just commenced French, "you are right, and no mistake ! the wind evidently blew in the direction of his Grace's hunt this night, and the admirable Barton put up the helm before it direct for the Gorse ; but to-morrow we must make sail, and clench the bargain — so *bon soir, jeune frère*, as John Crapeau says ; recollect we are going into G. to-morrow, to see the fat beef and fat mutton preparing for the *gastronomies* of gormandizing Christmas festivities."

A fine sight, truly, is it for a lover of agricultural produce—or I should possibly

more correctly denominate it the effects of agricultural produce, such as mangel-wurzel, swedes, oilcake, and all the possible delicacies provided for the brute creation to increase its natural proportions to an unnatural state of obesity at this jovial season of the year; or, at least, which was a jovial season of the year as I recollect it at the Old Hall at home, when roaring fires and rounds of beef, misletoe, and merry faces were as plentiful as holly-berries. In fact, fat beef and fat farmers' faces might be seen in abundance, and the one not dissimilar to the other in colour; as may be now, though they are unprotected: and forsooth, bullocks have of late years become fatter and fatter, till little else but fat remains; indeed, the reduction in the value of agricultural produce has made little reduction in their physical dimensions. As usual, on our arrival at G. on this, the Saturday before Christmas, we beheld the luxuries supplied for man's consumption; for every imaginable species of poultry was exhibited, as well as butcher's meat. We also beheld every imaginable

species of human nature ; and never shall I forget what in school-boy phraseology is termed the fun we had. First came Barley-corn, extolling the beef and abusing the times, as is still the fashion, and ever will be ; praising his gallant steed, pulling up his smart neck-handkerchief, and pulling down his still smarter waistcoat, and ogling and winking at the lasses, as if his fat, round, red, good-humoured face, which shone like a harvest-moon, was undeniable. In fact, good man ! he fancied himself a lady-killer—a very pink of perfection among the “gals,” as he termed even his betters. As we approached the cattle-market, that Mr. Western might cast his eye over the short-horned and straight-backed, and fat pigs—or I should rather call them “burstors”—he observed Barleycorn feeling, with considerable gusto and apparent knowledge of the art, the ribs of a wonderful animal—at least, he would have been wonderful if nature had so made it, and not oilcake, mangel-wurzel, and so forth. However, there he stood punching, and poking, and admiring ; and if the me-

mory of earlier days does not deceive me at this length of time, the bullock and the admirer did equal justice to their feeding. The lusty agriculturist turned from the bullock to the hogs as we came towards him, and after saluting us with a hearty "Good-morrow, gentlemen!" held forth on their bestial merits with an admiration that was positively astounding.

"Look here, Master Fred!" he exclaimed, "here's a beast! what lines! what buttocks! 'pon my conscience, he just his a hanimal!"

"A hanimal," said Arty, "truly a fat beast—doubtless most admirable beef! But how gets on the famous horse, Jumper? Are you bound, Mr. Barleycorn, once more for the chase? Do you know—have you heard—been told—or read of the fact, that the Duke of Gloucestershire's hounds meet at that celebrated covert Allington on Thursday next?"

"At Allington Goz!" replied Barleycorn. "Bedad! it's a long way from Peacock Farm: for all that, I should like to have a day with the Duc."

“And why not, Mister Barleycorn?” said a sharp voice, while a sharp hand was laid somewhat heavily on his shoulder—“and why not, Mister Barly? are you not the owner of the best horse in the county—the celebrated Jumper?”

“Maybe, Mister Hoofcut;” replied Barleycorn, “but I would thank you not to strike so hard. I have a good horse, but, as I was saying to these young gentlemen, the distance is great from Peacock Farm.”

“What then?” said Hoofcut, who was a character well-known throughout the county, “a man who is fond of hunting, has the best jumping horse in all England, as you say you have, with means and physical stamina far superior to that fat corpulent specimen of unnatural agricultural experimentalizing, should never fail to meet with such hounds as his Grace can boast of within twenty miles. I’ll be bound these young gentlemen will be there as well as myself on Wolti-geur, as my lad calls him!”

“Bedad! then I’ll go!” said Barleycorn, turning to admire a lump of lard, with a

hairy back and two small half-open eyes, which he termed a pig. I may here observe, that such like demonstrations of future bacon are as plentiful as crows at all the agricultural meetings in Old England.

Now I have already observed that Hoofcut was a character; and a character truly was he, though eccentric withal: and yet a kinder heart—a more gentle nature—or a more forgiving and charitable spirit, were never combined in human being, more than were they in Mr. Thomas Hoofcut, Veterinary Surgeon, of the ancient city we were then visiting—a man known to all the country round, not only for his thorough and practical knowledge of the art by which he gained his daily bread, which I am rejoiced to recollect was rather in proportion to the quartern loaf than the penny roll, for his skill was real and effective, his practice honest and upright; his love of animals a sort of *furor*, and his kindly feelings towards his fellow creatures, more particularly, as regards children, most sublime. What was the consequence? his practice was as extensive

as remunerative ; his kind acts as abundant as widely dispensed. For all that, he was what the world calls a character—indeed, have I not in one sense already said enough to prove that he was ? for, alas ! how few do we find in any position with so many merits and so few faults ! Therefore I may say he stood almost alone—not that he did stand much, for I scarcely ever recollect seeing him more than twice out of the saddle. I have spoken of this respected veterinary surgeon, long long ago defunct, inasmuch as his eccentricities, both as to dress and manner, were quite in keeping with his warm and charitable heart, and admirable conduct ; moreover, he was a good rider, and a first-rate sportsman. Let me endeavour to picture a slight man with broad shoulders, an aquiline nose, a high forehead, and sparkling eyes, standing about five feet seven in his boots, with legs in a trifling degree concave, from his constant equestrian practice : place on this person a low-brimmed hat, a dark brown well-brushed broad-flapped cutaway coat, with waistcoat to match, light kersey-

mere breeches, and well-cleaned and well-made boots, with bright spurs and mahogany, though not dirty, tops. Take off his coat and waistcoat, and you would have pronounced him a jockey; deprive him of breeches and boots, a quaker. His knowledge of horses as animals was first-rate; his knowledge of their physical ailings seldom equalled—indeed, both as regards horses, dogs, cattle, and even pigs, his opinion was sought; many and many a farmer had to thank him for saving valuable stock, as did he alike save the bacon of many a poor cottager, and that without remuneration. I have said his love of animals was a strong passion; much more so that towards his daughter, his only child and his idol; and although many may imagine that little romance can attach itself to the life or the death of a veterinary surgeon's daughter, yet was her beauty such, and her whole character so far beyond her position, as her death was sudden and painful and so connected with sporting, that I must briefly name her hereafter. Notwithstanding the

lapse of years, never can I forget my boyish admiration of her, seated on her clever horse, Sefton, which she so called from its having once belonged to the father of the present noble earl—as good a sportsman, and as admirable a gentleman, to say nothing of the noble attached to it, as ever rode to hounds. But of the daughter anon: I must say a few words more of the father. I fancy him even now standing in the stable-yard at the Old Hall, a horse paraded for inspection, the boy George, already named, at his head; Mr. Bradly, with hands in his coat-pocket; Dr. Hoofcut, ditto in his breeches' pockets.

“There’s a horse, Doctor! landed from Ireland last week—something of the right stamp, eh?—a true colt of Wall-topper’s, out of Flowers-de-Lis’s! There’s lines! there’s a back! there’s shoulders! The Squire gave a hundred-and-fifty—cheap at the money! He’s a rare horse, I’ll be bound in a heavy country!”

“Heugh!” said the Doctor, taking his hands from his pockets, and poking the horse all-over with his fore-finger as if he

were killing flies, and then running his hands down his legs, and looking well into his eyes; while Bradly was abusing the lad for not holding him quiet, notwithstanding the poking. He said, "Take the harse in, as you term him, lad—take him in, and take care of him ! The Squire knows a horse and his value. He is worth £250, or my name is not Hoofcut !"

And he was right : indeed, Mr. Western afterwards refused three hundred. His detestation of pulling horses almost equalled his love for his daughter—and not without reason, as I shall shew—a fact well known to those who know life, and witnessed it. The tale ran as follows.

A horse was one day brought for his professional approval as to its soundness, and after having fully examined it, he was requested to mount. He did so ; when just at the moment that he found himself in the saddle, ere his feet were in the stirrups, the hounds at full cry dashed across a field close at hand. The horse pricked up his ears and started racing pace. Hoofcut was not only

a good rider, but possessed an admirable hand ; but the brute he was about to pronounce sound in wind and limb had not previously permitted him to discover that he was an inveterate puller, with a mouth like iron. On raced the hounds ; on galloped Hoofcut—like Johnny Gilpin—over hedge and ditch. All he could do was to steer clear of the pack, and keep his seat ; his broad and low-crowned hat pushed down on his head. He sat back firmly and pulled, now easing off a point, now pulling hard. But what availed it ? To hear him describe the chase, and express his anger against all the pulling horses in the world, and the black beast, Satan, as he termed this one in particular, was a positive treat. The whole hunt were astonished—as well they might be—for by many, if not all of the leading riders, he was recognised ; and although generally well up with hounds, he by no means attempted, however well mounted, to shew the way—in some measure, possibly, from deference to most of the members of the hunt, by all of whom he was respected,

as from the habit of not being what is termed a bruiser. At length—strange as it may appear, but yet a truth—the hounds close to their fox, with a burning scent, entered what I should term an open covert—that is, a wood of oaks and beech trees, with little holding. Through this they raced, and Hoofcut unwillingly after them, till at length, and at the very moment they were running into their fox in the adjoining field, while in vain he endeavoured to hold his iron-mouthed horse, he found himself literally transfixed, horse and rider, between two wide-spreading branches of an aged oak that crossed his path. Here he stuck fast, totally unable to extricate himself, while the whole field—at least, such of them as had lived through a fast run, and were up to witness the death of a gallant fox—passed him in review; too intent, however, on the termination of so first-rate a chase, to do more as they galloped past than shout at poor Hoofcut, who struggled in vain for some time to deliver himself from his perilous position, till at length crash went the branch

beneath the horse's weight, when steed and rider bit the dust.

"Be d—d for the greatest brute man ever threw his leg across!" said the quaint veterinary, rising from the muddy earth on which he had rolled. "Be d—d for the most audacious puller, in all the country round! and do you, Barleycorn," he added, pulling his broad-brim hat tighter on his head, "buy him as a first-rate match for the Jumper!"

In truth, though eccentric in character as in dress, he was an admirable veterinary surgeon, and a most kind-hearted and charitable man. All the little boys and all the little girls of many a rural Gloucestershire village were ever ready to welcome Hoofcut, as Hoofcut was ever ready to bestow some kind words, or, what they deemed far better, some lollypops from his capacious pockets, on all the little girls and all the little boys. His remains rest beneath a stone in the churchyard of—; and while many a tale is told by the elder ones of what manner of man he was while living, there were few who

respected his memory, or appreciated his character and professional talent more than did the inmates of the Old Hall at home.

"Talking of hunting, Master Fred," said Hoofcut, "I fear me the hounds will not meet for a week or two to come, either in the Earl's or His Grace's country. Duck-shooting, I fancy, will be the best sport!"

"And why so?"

"Simply that the wind is shifting northwards, and a northerly wind and Christmas generally means frost, or snow, or both. However, I may be wrong, young gentlemen, and I trust I may, if your hearts are bent on the chase. What say you, Barley-corn?"

"Why, maybe it will freyze, and maybe it won't. If so be it does, there won't be no hunting, that's fact! but a week's hard weather, with some snow, will do a world of good to the land—and it has been so open hitherto. A rest will do the horses good also. But there be plenty of ducks, and no want of sport in the Brookland coverts—

with good skating on the lake, if so be it sets in strong. So what God sends man must be thankful for, if so be he can't go hunting !”

Well done, Barleycorn ! I was not aware you were so great a philosopher. Indeed, every season has its pleasures and beauties peculiar to itself : even winter, however cheerless to some, fulfils also in this respect the benevolent designs of the Creator. What can be more agreeable than to see a hoary frost encircling the tops of the trees, and all nature, as it were, clothed in a dazzling mantle of snow ? Were there no winter, neither spring, summer, nor autumn would display such a variety of beauties ; 'tis during the severity of winter, of all the tuneful tribes—

“ The Redbreast sole
Confides itself to man.”

Nothing marks more distinctly the approach of each season than the feathered songsters. Early in the spring, larks congregate and fly to the stubble for shelter ;

the sparrow begins to sing; the wren also
pipes her perennial lay,

“ While yet the wheaten blade,
Scarce shows above the new fall’n shower of snow.”

The skylark’s note in short excursion
warbles; jackdaws repair to the tops of
churches; and the grey-and-white wagtail
appears; snipes, woodcocks, herons, wild-
ducks, and other water-fowls retire from the
frozen marshes, to streams still open.

“ The fowler now steals upon the spot with cautious step,
And peering out, surveys the restless flood;
No objects meet his eye—
But hark! what sound is that approaching near?
Down close! the wild ducks come, and darting down,
Then up on many side the troubled wave—
Then gaily swim around with idle play:
He views their movements; while his well-taught dogs
Like lifeless statues crouch. Now is the time!
Closer they join; nor will the growing light
Admit of more delay. With fiery burst,
The unexpected death invades the flock!
Trembling they lie, and beat the plashing pool,
While those remoter from the fatal charge

Of the swift shot, mount up on vig'rous wing,
And wake the sleeping echoes as they fly,
Quick on the floating spoil the spaniels rush,
And drag them to the shore."

All seasons, all weathers, which God in his goodness has granted to man, have their charms and their enjoyments. To him who has a light heart, and a crown in his purse, feeling no hatred in his heart, and surrounded by the chosen of his affections, what more joyous than the winter season? To a sportsman and a lover of the country, it is possibly the choice period of the year—his mornings passed in hunting and shooting, he returns with health invigorated, and spirits exhilarated from the pleasures of the chase and exercise, to the cheerful home-circle, the blazing fire, the curtains closed, the apartment well-lighted and "comfortable"—to use the best of English terms—to enjoy female society, books, and music. Ah! 'tis a pleasant season, that of winter; though gladsome is the flowery Midsummer, and so ever was it at the Old Hall at home!

True to the opinion of Hoofcut, ere the

moon had well risen the ground was already hardened by the commencement of an intense black frost—so intense, indeed, that day by day the earth appeared the more and more as if bound in iron; the lakes were frozen over thick and strong; and skating, as wild-duck shooting, took the place of hunting; while friendly hospitality was dispensed with kind and generous plenty at the Hall to all the country round. Among the many who were wont to visit there, was one whose beaming face and amiable disposition I shall ever recollect with pleasurable feelings, though I was but a boy when he was ever welcomed at my home, though now long years have elapsed since his remains have been laid in the churchyard. At the period to which I more particularly allude, he might be fairly termed a country gentleman, of good family and sufficient means for all the conveniences—indeed, luxuries—of life. In manner he was kind and courteous to all; a just and active magistrate in summer; a thorough-going foxhunter in winter. No meet, however distant, whatever the weather, but there

he was if the hounds were there, mounted on a powerful horse; his fair, but handsome, cheerful face beaming with kindness and joviality.

“How now, boys?” he was wont to say, as we met after church—almost the only time in the hunting season we ever saw him, save at the dinner-table, or during a frost—“How now, boys? are you not for the meet to-morrow? Come over, lads, to Partridge Court, and dine with me!”

And then with equal kindness and generosity he would give us a tip when the holidays were over. But like many other men of his kindly nature, neglectful of business, and distrusting no one, he never could understand that a rent-roll of twelve hundred per annum was not sufficient to keep up a stable of twelve hunters, for not one of which he had given less than a hundred guineas, and to feast as to lend to his so-termed friends on all sides. So, rents being ill-paid, he had occasional recourse to a loan; and all the world knows that loans mean lawyers—and heaven help the man that requires their help! for he will soon become helpless. And such

was at last the fate of poor —— ! A first-rate rider, and as pleasant companion as ever sat before a well-provided board. The following lines, from the witty pen of Hood, precisely describe him as to his career :—

“What with keeping a hunting-box,
Following fox,
Friends in flocks,
Burgundies, hocks,
From London Docks,
Stultz’s frocks,
Manton and Nocks’
Barrels and locks,
Shooting blue-rocks,
Trainers and jocks,
Buskins and socks,
Pugilistic knocks,
And fighting cocks,
If he found himself short in funds and stocks,
These rhymes will furnish the reason !”

Such was the man : such were his virtues : such his errors. There have been many more such, and will be again.

While the frost lasts—and, to be truthful, it was a “stunner”—to use a “stunning” vulgar expression—permit me to speak of another well-known character, who has only

very recently resigned the chase, and with it a life—as far as his sporting passion was concerned—that is marked with pedestrian and other feats of a most extraordinary nature. Many a half-crown has slipped from my pocket into his in sheer admiration of energy, activity, and all-enthraling love for what is generally denominated sport; while, mounted on a tolerable nag, I have vainly endeavoured to beat him. This enthusiastic and truly admirable practical sporting biped was known throughout the Earl's hunt by the cognomen of Jim Hastings. If so be it was truly that given to him by his god-papa, I cannot vouch. I generally termed him "Jim," poor fellow, as he generally replied "Master Fred;" the "Master," as the "Fred," remaining much to my satisfaction from the day I first rode Barleycorn's Jumper, till that of my being gazetted as a captain of Light Dragoons—and may it evermore till the hour of death by word, as doubtless it did in recollection, had not the stalls of the Old Hall at home ceased to be tenanted by the hunters of Squire Western.

Now the well-known James Hastings—better known to the members and frequenters of the hunt as Jim the Jumper—was the descendant of highly respectable parents, his grandfather having not only claimed the peerage of Huntingdon, but he actually had himself expended the whole of his means on the prosecution of that claim. His father also was a person of considerable education and ability; and as an amateur actor of some celebrity, performed *Sir Peter Teazle* on the Cheltenham boards, frequently giving amateur theatricals at his own house. Jim Jumper, the subject of my early sporting admiration, was originally brought up—wonderful to relate!—as a tailor. No offence, ye most necessary and hard-working, and oftentimes ill-paid, members of society! But truth will out—and I must admit, what all the sporting reading world will admit, that it is astonishing, but not the less a fact, that this the ninth part of a man could perform such herculean pedestrian tasks as those I am about to relate:—

It was, if I err not, some thirty-six or

forty years lang syne that Lord F——, then Colonel B——, brought his hunting establishment to Cheltenham, that Jim was first seized with a positive *furor-de-chasse*; and one of his first feats in this line was to get up an amateur hunt of his own, which thus took place:—The meet was in the main street of Cheltenham; the pack, consisting of Jim's favourite terrier, and such other puny terriers, curs, or what-not, who were out for a bit of pastime; the game, a red herring attached to the wheel of the "High-flyer," a celebrated fast London coach. As the hour for its starting sounded on the church-clock, coachy mounted, and away they went. A few minutes being allowed—in due sporting style—the terrier leader of the heterogeneous pack was laid on the scent, and away they went, soon followed down the High-street by nearly every cur in the town—

"Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree."

This extraordinary pack chased down the

High-street, and along the Gloucester-road in full cry, continuing the pursuit as far as the "Pheasant"—a small roadside inn—where, the horses being frightened by the variety of canine notes, and the shouts of the followers, bolted, and upset the coach into the ditch. This was poor Jim's first hunting adventure, but by no means his last.

From that day he steadily attached himself to the Earl's hounds, attending all their meets on foot, both in the Cheltenham and Berkeley countries. Some of his feats, arising out of his intense passion for the chase, must have been all-engrossing and almost incredible: nevertheless, there are many who will corroborate the facts I name. To walk from Cheltenham to Berkeley—twenty-five miles—from thence to the meet; to follow the hounds all day, be in at the death, and return to Cheltenham home the same night, was a common occurrence. Another of his feats was still more remarkable:—The meet being at Broadway, sixteen miles from Cheltenham, he was up betimes in the morning;

walked from Cheltenham there; thence to the covert-side, eight miles; ran with the hounds all day; and was in at the death at Fairford, twelve miles; back to Broadway, twenty miles; and thence to Cheltenham, sixteen. But as if this was not sufficient to quench his indomitable ardour and physical power, he joined a badger-hunting party the same evening at Queen and West Woods, at least twelve miles more, making the distance accomplished between sunrise and sunset actually eighty-four miles! What think you of this, ye turtle-feeding gentlemen, who live at home at ease, and fancy that six turns on a dry terrace, in woollen hose and thick shoes and clogs, is exercise sufficiently fatiguing to secure appetite, digestion, and a snore after dinner! Indeed, his enduring powers were such as almost to stagger belief—so much so, indeed, that he was frequently mentioned in *Bell's Life* as the “Flying Tailor.” Numerous were the mounts kindly offered to him by members of the hunt and others, but invariably declined, inasmuch as he declared that riding was to

him far more fatiguing than walking and running. During the runs his services were great—far more than possible to say. Was there a gate to be opened, Jim was at the very spot; then shooting a-head he was not seldom in at the death before the best men in the field. With stick in hand, and hand in pocket, he could top the highest fence; and his opinion in reference to scent, and not less as regards the recovery of a lost fox; the admirable tact with which he would recommend a cast; and, in fact, his general knowledge of the chase was extraordinary. If ever a man was born a sportsman, it was poor James Hastings; and as such he died. The last “Tally-ho!” the last cheer to the pack running into their dying fox, has sounded in his ears. He is himself run to earth by the grim Destroyer: he has been in at the last death—his own! And honour be to the noble master of the hounds it was so long his delight to follow! He has generously provided the means for his respectable and decent funeral.

He has unhappily left a mother, aged

ninety, in indigent circumstances ; but doubtless the same kind protector will not allow her to want. In the days of her prosperity she acted the part of *Lady Teazle*, for the benefit of the local charities. May the local charitable now act the part of *Lady Bountiful* towards her. Sportsmen are generally kind, liberal, and feeling ; and humble though the hero of our tale was, he has left behind him many who will regret his absence at the covert-side when, the summer passed, its glories and delights give place once more to the sound of the huntsman's horn, and the chorus of the chase.

Another anecdote connected with this famous hunt, I shall give here as it was told me ; but the teller was a truthful man, and a clever one to boot ; it may be, therefore, that I may lose something in its repetition ; however, tis a simple matter, and the more simply told the better. On being applied to for a couple or two of hounds in aid of a pack which a good man was about to form to chase the varmints in a neighbouring county, their noble owner forthwith acquiesced, and

sent accordingly with kind greetings, among others a dog of high breeding, a very pet among the pets, which dog I shall here name Know-the-way. Well, the hounds were sent, arrived, were acknowledged, and so forth ; time passed, Know-the-way was almost forgotten ; how could it be otherwise ? the kennel contained eighty-four couple ; and where all, or nearly all were good, one, even though of the best could be spared. One morning, however, when the pack were in the Cheltenham country, and about shortly to return to that of Berkeley, the feeder was employed in making some arrangements, or in cleansing the kennel, or what not, when he fancied that he saw a hound, apparently fatigued and all bespattered with mud and mire, approach the kennel door, give one look in, and then turn off again ; on this he ran off to the main gates, and there, true enough, he saw a hound running at a rapid pace towards the town of Berkeley. “ Dang it,” said the man, on seeing one of his fellow-servants, “ was I not certain that Know-the-way wor in Wales, I would swear that I





G. W. H. H. L. O. T.

seed him here this moment agone." On the afternoon of the same day the feeder at Cheltenham was preparing for the hounds, who, according to the custom of years, were on that day, being Saturday, hunting the Broadway country, when he also declared that he saw this dog, Know-the-way, enter the kennel; he instantly endeavoured to secure the dog, but without effect, as he had bolted and escaped him. On the evening of that day the noble owner of the pack arrived, the sport being over, at the inn at Broadway, where it was his custom to quit his hunter for a carriage on his return to Berkeley. As he alighted he observed a hound almost entirely exhausted—in fact, an animal whose physical powers had been so tried that the breath of life was almost extinct—lying on the door-step. He looked at the poor dog, when, to his utter astonishment, he recognised his ancient comrade in many glorious days' sport, his poor hound Know-the-way; he raised him in his arms, he conveyed him into the house, and gave him restoratives, and then—smile not at such kind and sports-

manlike an act, ye Pharisees to all that is noble and generous in field sports—the Earl took Know-the-way into his well cushioned chariot, and conveyed him in all honour and due comfort to his former kennel, and his old companions welcomed him, and for several seasons afterwards this sagacious dog did good service in the Berkeley pack, and when his age permitted him no longer to join in the chase, warmth and comfort and kindness were bestowed on him; and when he died, a monument was erected to his memory, on which the virtues of the poor brute are set forth; and those who visit Berkeley may see proof of the fact I have here told—a tale well known in the Vale of Berkeley, and near the broad Severn, yet I would fain hope new, and therefore interesting, to thousands. Recollect, the distance from Wales to the Berkeley hunt it would be impossible to ascertain; as the crow flies, however, from point to point it is very considerable; but even the distance is less a source of astonishment than the fact of this hound having swam the river Severn, at a point where it

is by no means narrow, and where the current is extremely rapid. Arrived at Berkeley, he thence proceeded to Cheltenham without rest or refreshment, a distance of eighteen miles, and then to Broadway, twenty more. In fact, the courage, and powers of this animal can only be surpassed by his extraordinary instinct, which told him that the hounds not being at Cheltenham could be nowhere else but at Broadway, the day being Saturday. When I think of this sagacious animal, the following beautiful lines come back to memory—

“I am glad that my own eye watched thy dying,
For I know thy lot, old brute ;
And none can spurn thee where thou art lying,
Deep under the cedar’s root.
Thou wilt not meet a savage hand
To smite thee to the dust ;
Thou canst not pine with starving whine
For a morsel of wasted crust.
I’d rather look on thy grave, old hound,
Than wonder what hard fate thou hadst found.
I cherished thee long and liked thee well,
As the tears—aye, the tears—I have shed will tell :
There is nothing of shame in the lids that are wet,
When the drops are wrung by an honest regret.”

CHAPTER X.

TEN days of severe frost had bound the earth in an iron grasp, and our holidays were drawing to a close, when the will of God in one short night broke that iron grasp asunder as a reed. As I have said, it was our custom to sleep, *i. e.* the brothers, in adjoining apartments, the doors of which being ever thrown a-wide, was but a trifling separation. It was there, if I recollect aright, on the 14th of January in the Comet year, or thereabouts—(as that of 1851 will henceforth be termed that of the Exhibition, or the Eclipse, the former decidedly eclipsing the latter, inasmuch as there might have

been one in Norway; but forsooth! in Old England there was nothing but a soaker!—that my younger fraternity entered my dormitory in a somewhat airy costume, considering the period of the year and the severity of the season; in fact, though a portion of his somewhat slender person was covered by a snowy chemise, the shaggy capote would have been somewhat more to the purpose—which snowy chemise descended only to his knees, thus discovering a very indifferent pair of understandings, and exclaimed—

“Brother mine, awake from thy heavy slumbers! Awake! and look from thy lattice-window. Awake!” he repeated, shaking me by the shoulders, and with some difficulty arousing me, inasmuch as we had been from home on a Christmas revel the night previous, and had kept it up till two A.M.; added to which—boy though I was—I already found myself most devotedly in love with a little blue-eyed fair-haired girl, with whom I had danced and eaten bon-bons; and I was dreaming, at the moment I

was so roughly disturbed, that somehow or another I had become lord and master of the Old Hall at home, and of the sweet little creature in a white frock, and sash as blue as her eyes, and ankles as taper as her wrists, who, in after life, might have shared my fortunes, had not circumstances or the events of life, happily perhaps for us both, doomed it otherwise; and all I can hope is that her fortune has been a bright one, which then promised to be as fair and happy as her sweet self.

Yes! truly was I dreaming of one who had caused my boyish admiration—as it was termed—at this *bal de bonbons*, or, in good Saxon words, a sweetmeat-dance, the previous night. A more graceful child never entered a ball-room; but as it was the first, and, with few exceptions, the last time I ever beheld her, and as the impressions of a school-boy are not very lasting, my sentiments on the subject of her charms were not sufficiently formed to create any lasting or painful effects. All I recollect of her and those days lang syne is this fact: she had

eyes like those of a gazelle ; the most graceful of necks ; and the prettiest little ears and hands I ever beheld, save those belonging to one other woman in the world. We ate bonbons together to some extent—this was certainly doing it sweet ; and we tasted some *ponche à la Romaine*—that is, Roman punch, such as the Pope doubtless enjoys diurnally with his cigar—and fancied ourselves unquestionably not the least worthy of notice in that pleasant assembly. But somehow or another she was not fond of dogs, or horses, or hunting. When I said, therefore, with all the seriousness of a man on whose head some forty winters had waned, that I hoped the frost would break, that a-hunting we might go, and asked her if she knew Allington Gorse, the Duke, Will Long, or Barleycorn and the Jumper, she replied that His Grace visited her papa ; but as for Will Long and Barleycorn, she could not recollect that they numbered among the number of her papa's familiars, and she fancied having never beheld them ; and as regards hunting, she looked on it as rather a barbarous sport

—running a poor animal to death for the sake of his “tail;” and as for Allington, she knew it very well, but Gorse was an enigma. This my first flame became, years after, a Lady Jane. Her brother having succeeded, at the death of his uncle, to an earldom, married—at least, such is my belief—a foreigner, and died. Be it as it may, I was certainly dreaming of the pleasant evening I had passed, and the future Lady Jane in particular, when the voice of my fraternity aroused me from a heavy slumber: and thus dissolved at once the created charms which were floating in my fevered brain to oblivion, converting my awaking thoughts into the very perceptible fact that it was daylight, and the still more convincing one of its being a bitter cold morning.

“By George!” I exclaimed, drawing the bed-clothes round my shoulders, “it’s tarnation cold—as the Yankees have it—and what’s more, you have destroyed a most delightful dream.”

“Dreams be—!” What was the sequel to the exclamation I scarcely remember,

save that he added, "Instead of dreaming and snoozing there like a porker, be up and stirring! Are you not yet awake? or are you deaf to the sound of rain drops from the house-top?"

I was about to reply in his own style, and exclaim, "Be d—d to the drops! they will soon be converted into icicles!" when all at once it occurred to me that although the night previous had been starlight and clear, with a bright moon and a dense frost, that moon was encircled with a trifling mist, and that nothing being impossible to Him who created the world, it was quite possible the drops I heard were rain-drops, or the melting snow. And with this, and being now wide-awake in all conscience, I vaulted from my downy couch, as novelists often term the hardest of beds, displaying my juvenile person, which growing apace out of my midnight apparel, discovered my personal charms in a manner which would have shocked even Sally the housemaid. Open flew the window! and there—January morning though it was—I stood, unprotected, save by a yard or two of

calico, in a most happy state of pleasurable excitement—far more cheering, aye, and even warming, than the brightest of delightful fires, or the best of warming-pans.

Meltonians of high degree, by right of birth, or amiable qualities, or in your own estimation, do you recollect the sensations with which you have welcomed a good wholesome, undeniable, snow-destroying thaw after a severe black frost of a fortnight or three weeks' duration—during which time you have visited your well-filled stable of hunters, and sighed in vain for a change of weather, tapped the weather-glass, looked up at the sky, asked every other person you have met what he thought of the weather, and gone to bed hoping, yet not believing—for it was against all reason, having undeniable proofs to the contrary, in the fact of a northerly wind and cloudless sky—that it would thaw ere morning?

Provincials, differing only in appellation, as far as I can see, from Meltonians, as regards hunting! what have your feelings been with a stud useless, save to the corn-

factor and the hay-market? In fact, a gentleman jealous of his lady-love—a lady who finds that her admirer whom she adored is cooling; a nephew who hears that his beloved Aunt, from whom he had expectations of a high order, had died without leaving him a penny; or a man on the Porchester mud, in a wherry, with the tide ebbing—as I have been—has, believe me! no such pangs as he who desires to go a-hunting, has horses, and the wherewithal, and yet is doomed to whistle and wait till such time—as our canny friends anent the border term it—the weather becomes moist. The only man who enjoys a ten days' frost is possibly he who has but one nag, and yet will, from pure love of the sport, hunt when he can; and this same nag, having had a severe day as a finish, is recovered by the rest thus afforded. As regards myself I can honestly declare, joyful as had been the skating days, when clad in fur, and muffled up as were she a Russian princess, instead of a Gloucestershire lassie of good degree, Gussy, attended by her devoted Wilson, allowed us to drag

her about the lake on a light sledge built for the occasion ; and still more joyful as were our shooting excursions, when, during the mid-day sun, she would come out to cry over a wounded hare, or carry home a dead rabbit—these pleasures were nothing compared to that we experienced on beholding on the park-land here and there patches of green ; the brook already meandering along ; the ice breaking up ; no longer the snow hung in flakes on the spreading branches of the fir plantation ; faster and faster splashed the streams from the spouts on the house-tops. The ducks quacked ; the geese cackled ; the cocks crew ; the laundry-maids were equally joyful in the realization of their long-expected hope and desire for soft water.

A thaw ! a thaw ! a kingdom for such a thaw, and a good horse to ride to the hounds. We were soon dressed and out to the stables. The very horses appeared to feel happy and excited in the renewed expectation of hunting days come again. Old Corbeau pricked up his ears and neighed ; Brilliant switched her splendid tail, as if a

thaw brought sun, summer, and flies; Silvertail pawed, and welcomed us. And dreary, dismal, wet, dull, and desolate as was that morning, the ground half snow, half mud, the trees dripping, the woods hoary and damp—in fact, all nature looked as if it had a severe cold, with the addition of chilblains, ear-ache, tooth-ache, rheumatism, and nose-blowing; the very elm-trees appearing to cry out for brandy and water, and the oaks for punch to cheer them up. But for all that, the hearts of sportsmen—and how many were there in merry England!—beat cheerfully, I warrant me, in anticipation of pleasures to come in the gallant chase. Even the dear old dad, as he stood with his back towards the fire, and opened the newspaper, exclaimed—

“Well, boys, we shall have the meets advertised again: and we must look out for *Bell* next week, for surely after this long frost there will be some brilliant runs. And as your holidays are closing, and Gussy and I shall once more be left in peace and quiet, I think I must give you one more day with

the hounds. If so be they meet, as Farmer Ploughshare informed us would be the case previous to the thaw—at Allington Gorse, distant though it be, what say you, Gussy, darling? Shall the boys go to Allington or not?"

"Go, by all means, dear Dad; and let me go also!"

"No! pet, that cannot be; the distance is too far—the weather too uncertain. So you must even lend your old father Brilliant, as a covert hack, and in return I will ask the Earl to draw the Brooklands coverts ere the season is over."

"Hurra! for Allington Gorse," we both exclaimed, as we seized the hands of the dear old sportsman, "Hurra! for Allington Gorse? Gussy shall write us a full account of the brilliant day at Brooklands, or her day at Brooklands, on Brilliant!"

At this moment Mr. Hind announced that a Mr. Snareall, an attorney, requested a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Western.

"Who?" exclaimed my open-hearted Dad.

“Mr. Snareall, Sir,” replied Hind. “At least, such I understood to be his name.”

From what occurred at the time, in my heart I already hated the name of this attorney, inasmuch as he interfered at the very moment that we were discussing the question of a fox-hunt that was to be; and unfortunately I had cause to hate the man himself—though I consider the word “hate” almost un-English—as much as his name.

“Show him into the library,” said the Governor—adding, “Snareall? Snareall? rather a poaching name! What does the fellow want?” Attornies seldom have hunters to sell, save under an execution; and the Brooklands estate is happily unmortgaged at present.

With this he departed to the library, as did my brother and I on a visit to Ploughshare, in order to ascertain some further particulars as to Allington Gos, as he termed it.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT room more agreeable to inhabit than a well-filled library, appertaining to a squirarchial hall of olden days! Situated in one of England's most glorious and luxuriant vales, what comfort reigns there in mid-winter's time, when the broad hearth on which a well-seasoned log, bright and blazing, causes warmth and cheerfulness to the whole apartment—as in summer time the large windows thrown a-wide, admitting the refreshing air from the park, fragrant with the sweet smelling odours of jasmine, rose, and clematis, clustering o'er its oak-panelled and ancient mullions! Permit me,

however, brother sportsmen, and fair readers—I care not how many—to introduce you more particularly into the library of the Old Hall at home. Opening from my mother's bright and sunny drawing-room, as also communicating with the principal entrance, was my father's most charming, or more properly speaking, most commodious and agreeable sitting-room. In form it was oblong, and by no means lofty: three of its sides being filled with books, in old elaborately-carved oaken book-cases. Above the ample fire-place, in which were old-fashioned dogs instead of a grate, for the purpose of burning wood, was also a carved oaken and high mantel-piece—from childhood to manhood my delight. Many and many a winter's hour have I sat on a low stool, reading some sporting anecdote beneath its shelter, protected from all save the engrossing passion for sport I was imbibing from my book, as never was I tired of admiring the carved figures which adorned it, of men, horses, and dogs, purporting to be a hunting party of other days in full chase after the

antlered monarch of the woods ; easy chairs of capacious dimensions were scattered here and there about the room—some with high and ancient backs, some of more modern taste, and if not precisely so picturesque, at least more agreeable for physical comfort. A ponderous and handsomely carved writing-table stood in the centre of the room ;

“ And here and there were scattered o’er
Some relics quaint of ancient lore,
With modern luxuries and ease.”

But that which really attracted my youthful admiration more than all else—aye, even more than the elaborately-carved gentlemen in jack-boots with hunting-horns, who appeared, every one of them, to be doing their best to catch the stag, instead of allowing the hounds—was a beautiful and valuable picture by Murillo, which hung above the high mantel-piece, well-nigh to the ceiling of the apartment—the subject of which was supposed to be, and I believe literally was, a full-length portrait of Murillo himself, in hunting, or rather shooting costume, leaning

on the barrel of a somewhat lengthy gun, with two beautiful Spanish pointers at his feet. So expressive was his countenance—so life-like the man—so true to nature the dogs, that I ever looked on it with a feeling that, were I in a position to buy a picture on which the sum of a thousand guineas was named as a price, that was the one; and were I a woman, and could fall in love—behold the man! with his speaking eye, and noble expressive countenance. If I admired this beautiful specimen of dead art, however, how far more I loved a still more beautiful specimen of living nature, whose usual place was, stretched on the hearth-rug before the blazing log! This was a noble rough deerhound—the pet and friend of all within the house, as of a large circle. Dear old fellow! when sorrow came to the home where once plenty and love, cheerfulness and affection, so fully existed, his caress was never the less warm, his true heart never failed; his master, and those his master loved—he loved, without change, interest, doubt, jealousy, or hypocrisy—to the last.

Although for the moment digressing from my story, I must beg leave to mention one or two trifling anecdotes in connection with this noble animal, which will not be unacceptable to sportsmen, and, I trust, not to human nature. My sister had a small but beautiful terrier—in fact, at times, more than one. The love of animals was a family and amiable failing. These pugnacious little gentlemen were continually getting themselves into scrapes. On one occasion the smaller one, doubtless not without deserving it, was receiving a tolerable thrashing from a heavy bulldog, belonging to a neighbouring butcher, when this noble deerhound—the gentlest of all creatures, till roused—seized the bulldog, strong and savage as he was, and destroyed him instantly. His gentleness to women, as his love for biscuits, was remarkable. We scarcely dared mention the word “biscuit,” but he was restless and distressed till he got one: and what is still more remarkable, though I fancy not uncommon among dogs, the mere mention of the word church was

quite sufficient to induce him to remain calmly before the fire; whereas on other days he would bound with joy to follow us the moment any one appeared with hat or bonnet on.

Thus much for the interior of my father's favourite room, of which this dog was ever the living ornament. Now those who will stand by my side, and within the shelter of the large protecting windows, shall look forth on one of dear England's noble home prospects, such as cannot be compared with—for they exist not—in any other country in the world. Smooth as a carpet of Genoa velvet, and green as the early wheat of spring, behold an extensive lawn sloping to the margin of a beautiful lake, the side most distant from the house being sheltered by spreading oak and beech trees, intermingled with many splendid specimens of evergreens of all kinds, reaching to the water's edge,—the trees dipping their pendant boughs, stooping as if to drink—while beyond, and higher up the park, a dense and magnificent English wood entirely protected

the beautiful, though by no means extensive domain, from the keen north-easterly blasts. In midsummer time this beauteous lawn, interspersed with many-coloured beds of roses, geraniums, and other lovely and brilliant hues, was a perfect picture, which imagination can scarcely embrace; while in spring and autumn it offered scarcely less charms; and what a battle-field has it been to us, when, assembled there, some half-score merry lads were wont to meet in battle-array, with snowballs as their weapons, and the frozen lake their place of retreat! Possibly, however, of all the seasons of the year, the autumn was—to me, at least, when the age of manhood was approaching—that I looked on the well-remembered scene with most softened feelings of admiration and delight. The glorious old wood, the gnarled trees which, could they have spoken, might have told many a tale of my ancestry, particularly of the sporting members—really, in its autumnal garb of varied tints, when the sun cast its rays full upon its noble sweep, was beyond description beautiful. The placid

lake, the distant luxuriant country beyond the park, seen in the grey stillness of a bright but sinking October day, the lawn with its geraniums, verbenas, and dahlias : the distant sounds of the sheep-bell, and the young sportsman's heart filled with pleasurable anticipation of the approaching hunting-season, was and will combine a memory that will go with me to the grave. But affection, as possibly artistic taste, may draw a still more pleasing picture : therefore, Mr. Snare-all, you must wait awhile ensconced in that commodious arm-chair, in deep thought as you appear to be, instead of looking from the lattice-window. It is possibly your pleasure, as you sport with men's hearts, instead of fair wild game, to think how best you can gain your point, or make your conscience easy—to run fairly into your quarry. For my part, give me glorious nature—God's own handiwork : forsooth, I could almost live in the woodlands, desiring to meet solely at the covert side, or in the middle of a good run, with men ; for there, forsooth, all evil passions appear to evaporate, and nothing

but the very cream of the human heart displays itself. However, we have all our tastes, feelings, and professions : so rest you there, Mr. Attorney-at-law, while I look once more on the well-kept lawns of dear old Brooklands. Let the season be the end of the merry month of May, when all nature is bedecked in a garb of brightest hues—the charming, cheerful, happy month of May ! harbinger of summer ! advent of the nightingale ! Fancy a delicious morning of that truly pleasant month—yes, delicious is the word, though doctors may differ as to whether there is or is not anything delicious that touches not the palate. Prythee ! let them differ : the morning was delicious ; and on that lawn, amid those bright flower-beds, there stood a group, beyond the power of my pen to sketch in all its beauty. Beneath a wide-spreading and handsome cedar, which not long since I witnessed with overflowing eyes, half reclined my young and graceful sister, Gussy—she had thrown aside a Leghorn hat, the brim of which was large enough to have satisfied the richest of West

Indian planters : in her lap a small and beautiful bright-eyed terrier had established itself ; while another, equally handsome, but of a totally different breed, was making a jealous attack to supersede him in so favoured a place. With the one hand she was caressing these her smaller favourites, while the other arm was thrown around the neck of the noble hound I have already alluded to, looking up towards her face with his mild, full, and affectionate eyes, and literally resting his head upon her shoulder, flowing on which, in golden ringlets, her tresses, free as the air she was enjoying, descended. Blue was the vault of heaven ; bright the warm spring sun ; calm the silvery lake ; while birds innumerable in the distant woodlands, as in every tree and bush at hand, sung forth a chorus of song such as no human voice can ere attempt to vie with—no, not even that of Jenny Lind.

Watch at the window : see another actor walks across this one of nature's most beautiful theatres : her voice speaks in friendly words—"Come, darling ! As usual, I have

found you beneath the cedar, with your dumb friends : and, ah ! faithless ! how often have you promised me not to throw aside your hat : this hot sun will destroy your complexion !”

“ Yes, mamma ; but you see these bright-eyed friends of mine asked me to come and have half an hour’s play ; but now the time is up, and I am ready, dearest mother, to do all you wish.”

“ Well, love !” putting her arm around her neck, spite the gentle reprimand as to her complexion, &c. ; and both mother and daughter—two fond friends—departed from this beauteous scene ; a scene, pardon me ! reader ; always so endeared to my boyish recollection, that in the hour of sorrow, as in that of joy, in the battle-field in foreign lands, in the gallant chase in my own, it has often crossed my wandering imagination, and caused it to halt there.

CHAPTER XII.

“I am a stranger here in Glostershire—
These high wild hills, and rough uneven crags,
Draw out our miles and make them wearisome.”

BUT what of Mr. Snareall? he has not been looking from that window? No. True, it was winter time. Scarcely had his small and fox-like eyes been cast on that glorious picture of Murillo; if so, the thought arising from such act had been to consider its probable value, or to wonder how, having such a possession, a man could allow it to remain at the top of his mantel-piece, instead of converting it into stock.

No—he reclined luxuriantly ensconced between the cushions of a large arm chair, not however with the ease or apparent habit of one who daily finds himself so seated as a matter of course, but with the vulgar and hateful presumption which looks on poverty as dishonour, and wealth the one and only virtue which enables man to mount the ladder of distinction here on earth; and for all he believed to the contrary, to attain the bliss of heaven hereafter—and as far as the earth is concerned, he was, unfortunately, not far wrong. In fact, in the estimation of Mr. Snareall, the man wanting money, however exalted his talents, his virtues, or even his rank, unless he possessed an actual title—which to him had a value—was nobody, and ought not to encumber the earth with his presence; and, in like manner, all human beings rose in his estimation in exact proportion to their worldly wealth. Money was his idol—to make it his daily occupation, to increase it his hourly thought—his nightly dream. He had, in fact, but one object in life—in plain language, the surest and

quickest way of turning a shilling into a guinea. A lord was only a lord to him, if wealth was not attached to the coronet; a woman, however fair in person or refined in mind, a mere animal of household necessity, to order or cook dinners, and receive or wait on company—save that she had wealth, and then she was an angel. The fairest landscape was to him a desert if the lands on which he looked were of little value per acre, or the glorious woods unfitted for the axe. Sportsmen were mere savages who expended money on expensive and evanescent pastimes, instead of converting that money by usury into more—sporting, in its practical sense, a joy unknown to him, save the sporting with people's feelings to his own advantage—horses, mere animals to assist the labours, not the pleasures of man; dogs, created brutes to guard the house from the midnight burglar, or to tend the flocks.

Such was the individual who presumed thus unsolicited, to seat himself in a chair, which from generation to generation had been handed down in the family at Brook-

lands, and wherein the highest in the land in birth, and mind, and virtue, had been proud to find themselves — when the Squire of Brooklands entered, and thus courteously addressed him,—he scarcely arose.

“Good morning, Sir! I would hope that I have not kept you waiting? To what may I be indebted for the pleasure of your visit? magisterial business, I conclude—or are you desirous to add to my stud? If so, I may as well tell you at once that my stable is tolerably full at the moment.”

“Neither the one, or the other,” replied Mr. Snareall, only half rising from his well cushioned chair; “neither the one, or the other. I know nothing whatsoever of an ’orse, save that those in the London cabs, poor brutes, are rarely up to the work required of them, considering the price charged for conveyance. And as for magisterial business, I am a Londoner who arrived last night by mail, and was put down at the end of a narrow Lane, whence I had to walk with my bag on my shoulder half a mile in the mud and dark, to the Western Arms—im-

properly termed an Inn—there to obtain a bad bed and a worse chop, for which I shall probably have to pay high.”

“ Well, Sir, pardon me ! it will teach you this lesson in future. When next you come into Gloucestershire, ask for some eggs and bacon, or bacon and eggs, and a quart of home-brewed instead of a chop and sherry, and you will be well served for little outlay ; and now, what may be your business ? Is it of dog or horse, mead or woodland ? We are plain, and I trust, honest people in these parts—respecting men for their virtues, and, as I hope, pitying and pardoning their errors ; loving nature for nature’s sake, and even dumb brutes for their affection to man. So fear not my faithful companion, though he certainly does not look pleasant to-day ;” this had reference to the noble deer hound I have already named, who having followed his master into the library, was apparently ill-pleased with the manner of the visitor, from some cause or another derived from instinct. “ A splendid animal, is he not, Mr. Snarball ?”

“Snareall, at your command, Sir—a very fine brute indeed, but I am little accustomed to the canine race; moreover, so large a creature as this would be insupportable in a metropolitan residence, and—down you—ladies’ lap-dogs, Squire, (and this with some vulgar familiarity) are bad enough, but I cannot abide big creatures like this. What a vast quantity of victuals fit for human beings he must consume. In fact, the dumb brutes are not particularly to my taste.”

“Nor the talking ones to mine,” the noble animal appeared to say, as with his brilliant eyes he first looked fondly on his master, and then turning towards Mr. Snareall, gazed at the man—as much as to say, “only give me a chance, that’s all, and I would shake the breath out of your body for speaking so disparagingly of my race;” while the Squire, taking up the cudgels in behalf of his favourite hound, exclaimed with some ire,—“Dumb creatures, dumb brutes as you term them—yet not in the sense you use the word, I fancy, dumb creatures! Why the two homely words convey an appeal to our protection and pity.

Dumb creatures are in their love so faithful, so patient in their sufferings, so submissive under wrong, so powerless for remonstrance or redress, that we take their parts against the human brutes their oppressors, as naturally as were it a positive duty. I am not sure that I do not carry my sympathy still further. But I see, Sir, you do not go with me. I therefore ask your forbearance that I should have commenced a conversation in which doubtless you are little interested, and consequently have wearied you—so once more let me say, now to business. To what am I indebted for this early visit?"

"Why, Squire, I will be as frank and as brief as possible," said the little man in black, who, though he boasted of no tail, must have belonged to the Nick family; for as he arose from his soft cushioned chair, his little sharp eyes appeared to glisten, as those of a hawk about to strike his quarry. "I come not from myself or of myself, though I am literally speaking here myself,—but from that highly respectable trio or firm of Bagall, Payne *and* Snareall, of which I am the

junior, though I would hope, not the least important limb."

"Oh! a lawyer! a lawyer, are you?" said my good old parent, who was then unaccustomed to the profession—would he had ever been so.

"Yes, Sir! I have the honour to belong to that useful and dignified calling; so I may at once proceed to inform you that we three A.A.L.'s, which readeth, attorneys-at-law—were sitting together a few nights since, after office hours, over a broiled bone and a sneaker."

"A sneaker!" exclaimed my governor, "and what may that be?"

"Why, Squire, a sneaker—did you never hear it called by that name? Well, to explain in City phraseology, it meaneth nothing more or less than a stiff glass with or without hot or cold—of cognac, rum or ginsums, as may be, according to taste, with just sufficient aqua-pure, or in nature's terms, hard-water, to extinguish the fire, but not the aroma, of the alcohol. This is a sneaker—so-called from the peculiarly mild,

yet extremely delicious manner with which it ripples down the throat, most agreeably exciting the palate, as the senses of man. A broiled bone, or a rasher, such as you recently alluded to, or even a crust and a piece of Cheshire, and an onion from its mother earth, are most undeniably sociable accompaniments ; exciting the mind to more than ordinary powers, and assisting digestion in a most desirable manner. Indeed, I most strongly suggest and recommend a nocturnal sneaker with the accompanying little agreeable entrees I have named to your honoured self in particular, as to the whole Brooklands establishment in general, not even forgetting the female branch of your household, who, if they differ not from the young women who are bred and born within sound of St. Paul's, are above all the human race most addicted to sneakers and young onions."

"I feel highly obliged for your suggestion—but pray proceed with your business."

"Well, Sir, to continue—we lawyers are a practical species, given little to writing ; our clerks make out our bills' of costs, spoil

parchment and issue writs. But as I was saying, Bagall, Payne, and your humble servant, were enjoying a little physical, as well as mental recreation after the labours of the day, when our good waiting-maid, Matilda, entered the room, and placed on the table that friend to mankind, and the people of England in particular, known to all the reading as the unreading world, 'The Times.' Well, Squire—the 'Times' lay then and there on the mahogany, when Payne, whom we term the dirty work Co.; that is, a right, straightforward, sharp, legal adviser, who never says die, but go a-head and get all, or beggar your neighbour. What's the odds? his money, his coat, or his life? it's all the same in the end—in fact, a regular out-and-outer in the way of practical business—having placed his third empty tumbler on the table and crossed his slippered feet on the fender, suggested a trifle of the news. News! exclaimed Bagall, finishing his sneaker, and taking up the paper, news! Why, by St. George! the grand Broad Guage have got their Bill to Bath and Bristol, and contem-

plate a branch right through the Vale of Brooklands, to the good old City of Gloucester."

"The devil they do!" said Mr. Western, "then I'll be hanged if they touch my land."

"Pardon me, Sir, pardon me"—interrupted Snareall. "I said projecting, not projected—nothing is decided, in fact."

"And never will be, while I am owner of this property."

"The Parliament House of Commons are a powerful, and oft-times, a self-willed body of legislators—so it is impossible to say what may or may not occur—events and time only can explain. Bagall, however, with a keen perception of advancing times, and a still keener head for the main chance, seeing the possible, nay, probable intention of the Broad Gauge Directors, has—or rather is, desirous of giving them the go-by. So we three—that is, the Co.; Bagall, Payne and self, put our heads together over another sneaker, 'with' Squire. Yes, observe me, 'with' Squire, and ere the night passed, it forcibly occurred to us that something might

accrue to our respectable firm, if leaving the Great Guage to project, we should proceed at once to business, and get up a line ourselves.

“This great question unanimously agreed on, we retired and slept soundly on the subject; and the next morning, after a substantial breakfast, having in no manner deviated from the previous night’s decision, we requested the opinion of Mr. Hawkseye, R.E., the celebrated Engineer, who took up a map of the county, and with a broad nibbed pen, laid down a narrow guage line which will run right through the east end of your park, sweeping away, I regret to be obliged to notice, one of your lodges and sundry fine old oaks, passing, I very much fear, through the centre of your breeding paddocks, but putting several thousand pounds into your pocket. This settled, Bagall draw up a prospectus, with much intelligence and conciseness—selecting in his imagination, and forwarding to the printer, with an assurance of their acquiescence, several influential names, among whom you number as a Di-

rector. Of course, adding those of the firm as legal advisers—Hawkseye as engineer, and Dick Sawdust, Bagall's wife's cousin, as Secretary. This speedily arranged, we dined together at Richmond—turtle, turbot, venison; a few extra trifles, chateau margot, and so forth, naturally putting the outlay down to the account of Company—to be, a mere trifle. Nine, thirteen, including waiters and sneakers—and here I am, as a County Inspector-General, Canvasser and Enquirer, soother of landlords, and so forth, at your command.”

As I heard my dear old parent subsequently admit, in his first moment of anger, he could scarcely refrain from taking up the poker and beating the rascal's brains out; and then he laughed, and added, “Well, his skull might have been too thick and hard even for a poker;” and then he bethought himself to throw him out of window but that might have injured Gussy's flower-beds—or have kicked him out of the room. But Squire Western was a gentleman, which comprises innumerable excellencies

and noble feelings—moreover, he was benevolent and gentle; so he commanded himself in a great measure, only exclaiming—

“Then, Sir, whatever you may call yourself, the sooner you return to your insolent employers, the better. Tell them that for three hundred years my ancestors have lived respected at Brooklands, loved by their tenants without law or lawyers, engineers or railways—that hitherto I have considered an Englishman’s house his castle, and if any of your people put a foot on my land, my servants will have orders summarily to eject them, either over the gates or into the lake. It is not my custom to treat a stranger with discourtesy or inhospitality, therefore, I beg you will order refreshment, and then the sooner you leave Brooklands, the better—and mark me, should my name appear in print as a Director in your scheme, hateful as law is to me, I will sell my whole estate rather than not effectually punish you—so take warning. And now, excuse me, Mr. Bagall, Payne, or Snareall—whichever you

may think fit to call yourself, as a member of so respectable a firm—I am going to Low Bottom Copse with my boys to look for woodcocks—better pastime, I imagine, than concocting railways.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“GOING to Low Bottom Copse with his boys, to look for cocks,” sneeringly exclaimed Snareall, as the Squire left the library. “Going to low bottom devil—degenerate human nature—vulgar sporting habits—wading through mud and mire, wood and brake, to kill a few harmless birds, which can be bought for money in the market—and this is termed sport. Alas! what frivolity and weakness, at the very moment I come to offer thousands for the making a mere footpath through his property—poor benighted old man—his tastes are sufficiently displayed on these walls. Here a mare with

a foal by her side. That picture alone would fetch hundreds—and another, a sporting piece by Meadows, doubtless valued at another thousand—and so on. Alas! what little reverence for all powerful money—were they mine, how soon would I convert them into cash! No wonder, such people as these submit to be taxed—taxed, and so they ought to be, that we the working bees in the great hive of life may live. They have means to feast, hunt, shoot and sleep; but such men as Bagall, Payne and Snareall, never sleep—or if they do, it is ‘with one eye open,’ like the Bristolians. No, they are ever wide awake while money can be extracted from the pockets of their fellow-creatures.”

Would that Bagall had been bagged himself, ere he or his Co., Mr. Snareall, ever crossed the threshold of dear old Brooklands. Payne would have caused us all less suffering in after years. As it was, at the moment Mr. Snareall went his way, fuming and fretting, and wondering how any one could be so *great* a simpleton as to pass his time in

wasting powder and riding to hounds, while thousands were to be had for the mere asking.

We, then merry sporting boys, being soon joined by the governor, walked briskly away that fair winter's morning to the most celebrated spot in all the Vale for cocks. Scarcely had we reached it, than whir-whir-bang, a miss, by St. Hubert! "I was thinking of that confounded lawyer and his insolence," said my father. "Ten thousand pounds, for what? to drive a roaring, tearing steam-engine right through my home park and destroy all the privacy of happy Brooklands. No! no! never, while I live. Whir-whir-bang, again—how now? another miss!" and yet he was reckoned the best shot of the county—"Hang me, but this fellow has unnerved me with his confounded railways; but come, boys, I will kill the next for a crown." And so he did,—and another, and another, till the short winter's day closed; and once more a happy family party, we sat around a blazing hearth at the old hall at home. Dinner over,—as was occa-

sionally the custom on cock-shooting days when we were all alone—the old keeper was directed to attend, bringing with him on a sort of large wicker-work tray, the produce of the day's sport. This was a matter of great enjoyment, not only to Arty, as myself—but verily, Gussy loved to handle the birds. Even my dear mother would sometimes, though calmly, enter into our joys, in her delight at witnessing the health and spirits we gained by being constantly in air and exercise. Moreover, the aged keeper was a character, in these days rarely met with—as fit a subject in physical bearing for the display of talent in an artist—as were his many excellences as a servant, and qualities as a man. My pen, I greatly fear, will but feebly do him justice. Nevertheless, though long years have passed since I looked on his manly form, and he has ceased to be numbered among the living—yet he stands out so clear in my mind's eye, that I fear not to be enabled to sketch him as he appeared on that memorable evening at Brooklands—inasmuch as it was the era

which commenced those events which cleared the stables of its gallant hunters—the woodlands of game—the hall of generous hospitality—breaking the best of parents' hearts, and leaving eventually little or nothing to those who remained, but firm affection the one for the other. The Brookland acres were sold or mortgaged—entails cut off—the Hall let, and those who had been nursed in the lap of luxury, and educated in all the generous principles of human nature, became professional wanderers.

But the dining-room door is thrown open, and Jack Forster is announced by Hind, the butler.

“Come in, Jack”—said the Squire, “put your spoils on the side-board, and drink the King—God bless him.”

Now Jack, or old Jack—sometimes dear old Jack, as we familiarly termed him—stood exactly six-feet-two without his shoes, and was proportionably strongly built, though an ounce of flesh could scarcely be found on his body. Whatever the amount of muscle, his hands and feet were large and strong,

though not ill-formed; while his face was one of the handsomest and most benevolent I ever beheld—forehead high and broad, eyes brilliant and mild, with a smile about his mouth which many a fair woman might have envied. For all that—kind though his disposition—with temper gentle as a lamb—he was firm in his duty as a keeper—as brave as a lion, and moreover, an admirable sportsman and very fair shot. Jack, in truth, was much esteemed by the whole family, as was he in the neighbourhood; a fact which went further to prevent poaching, than his well-known courage and active zeal. He had lived with two generations at Brooklands Hall, and died in their service.

Jack did as he was bid; laid the game on the sideboard, and advancing to the table, stood as erect as a life-guardsman saluting “the Duke”—as noble a specimen of the animal man, as man’s eye ever looked on, or woman’s either. The Squire of Brooklands filled a bumper—the glasses in those days were not quite so ridiculously small as they were subsequently, or quite so large, or so

greatly improved as they now are. So, raising the thimbleful to his lips, he said in broad Somersetshire dialect, for he was a Somersetshire man—staring full in the face of dear Gussy, whom he had held in his arms as a baby, and looked on as a sort of angel in petticoats—"Here's a health to the King; God bless him, and Miss Gussy in particular."

"Very well," said the good Squire, "very well, Jack; but His Majesty's health should always be drank alone and with reverence. So here," filling another bumper, "toss off this according to your own desire—two such glasses only make one for such as you."

"Well, your magisterial honour"—he had the greatest respect for his master's magisterial dignity, possibly from his constantly threatening people who were found poaching or trespassing, to take them before his honour, the Magistrate of Brooklands: "I'll just drink Miss Gussy again, Missus, and all the family at home."

"And a right good toast—now, Jack, what have we done to-day?"

“Done, your worship? why nothing worthy of a magistrate,—I’m stagnated”—this was a favourite word of his—“I’m stagnated if your honour did not miss two cocks most promiscuously. I’ve seed your worship kill dead many livelier birds nor they, and the distance was noot at them of the morn.”

“Well, Jack, never mind what I missed, but let the ladies see what we killed.”

“Well, I’m stagnated your honour; but there was not much to-day for a sporting magistrate, and him the Squire of Brooklands—for let whom will say nay—I, Jack, whose lived well nigh two score’ years in the family, will back him either with flint or these new fashioned caps, to beat ere a lad in the two counties.”

“Then let us see the bag of to-day.”

“Well, your worship, there is as nice a couple of young birds as ere fell to powder; handle them, Miss Gussy; beautiful plumage, fat, and fit for the spit; I’m stagnated if they are not. There are two couple and a half more to match, a couple of ducks, two

brace of pheasants, a lease of hares, and nine rabbits, and what's more, your honour, we scared away a fine young dog-fox, from one of our best preserves—so the boys cannot complain of old Jack—I'm stagnated, but I mean the young gentlemen."

At this correction we all laughed heartily, while the Squire added, "I should regret to see the day when the hounds draw the Brooklands' coverts without finding, and after all missing or killing. I think our sport was tolerable this morning."

"Well, your worshipful honour -- well, I'm stagnated : but I recollect the day when your honour never left Low Bottom Copse without a bag full of cocks, and not a miss. To-day you killed only two couple and a half, and missed three favirish shots. Master Fred brought two couple to bag, and hares and rabbits counts for little or nothing in Brookland Vale."

"All true, Jack—all true. Now tell me, how goes the weather to-night, more frost ? or will the foxes have to fly for their lives again to-morrow ?"

“Mild, your honour—mild as small beer, and fair—wind southerly—we shall have rain ere morning, or I’m stagnated, but not much of it. His Grace of Gloucestershire meets near home, at the Cross Kays, and the Earl at Broadways. ’Tis Saturday, if your worship minds, and them young fellows—I’m stagnated—beg your honour’s pardon, Master Fred—and the Duke’s godson, looks though as if they’d loik to be at both hunts at the same time, and see both the warmints killed. But the Duke meets at Harlington on Monday, I s’poses. You three will be there, cause I seed Bradly a taking a hairing on Corbeau, and he told me he was just a winding on him, and taking the bains out of him that he might lead the field on Monday; and Jeemes was on Silvertail, and the boy, George, also looked affrighted, was on Friar Tuck, the new ’orse — and they all three started when I left them and went across the park and over the hurdles and brook at the waters meet, like antelopes.”

“The deuce they did, Jack,” said I; “confound that fellow Bradly—he promised me,

when next he gave the hunters a gallop across the park, I should ride Friar Tuck myself, to try his paces."

"And so you shall, my lad, if events and weather permit, at Allington Gorse. But recollect, boys, this must be the last hunt this season; and now, Jack, good night, for I see Miss Gussy is getting sleepy. The boys and I will have a round or two at Oronoco,"—in which I well recollect having been so interested as often to lose my temper, which, however, I soon happily regained, as who would not in such company as that of Squire Western—"so once more, good night, and may sound and uninterrupted sleep prepare your mind to enjoy the peace of the morrow's Sabbath."

CHAPTER XIV.

'Tis the afternoon of Sunday, the beautiful service—made doubly impressive by the manner in which it was performed, as well as the knowledge that we listened to a noble-hearted Christian—is over, and we issue forth in the mild, but closing evening, to bid good-day to one, to receive the hearty “hope you are all well at the Hall, young gentlemen,” from another, with many a kind word from old and young, mostly tenants of Brooklands—who lingered in the churchyard, or slowly went homewards. Among those with whom we stopped to speak, however, was young Ploughshare, already named,

Mr. Selwyn, and the village surgeon. The first, a straightforward fellow, who could read and write—this was the extent of his education. But he was a good practical farmer, possessing a sound, honest heart, and withal was humble as to his own merits, save in regard to riding, and strange as it may appear, it was of all things that in which he least excelled; plough he could marvellously well, reap, and mow, and all that better than any of the labourers on his farm. But ride he could not, he had neither hand or seat; but he had nerve, and that which is vulgarly termed pluck, or, more properly speaking, the manly courage of an English yeoman. And the consequence was often well nigh fatal to him, for he would charge a fence almost impracticable—which a good rider might possibly have surmounted—but into which or over which he was sure to fall; not a wit annoyed, however, at such continual downfalls—for loosely as he rode, lightly he managed to fall, and, save an occasional bruise and much mud, he carried little harm from the hunting field.

“Well, young gentlemen,” he exclaimed, as we met, “the day for Allington Gos is nigh at hand—won’t we have a burster, that’s all, if he goes downward across Farmer Gresham’s water meadows, and faces them ere stiff hox fences, as he did last season, where I got such a smasher in the clay-pit. The weather is mild to-night, and promises fair. But here comes Doctor Lingforth; how are you, sir—for the meet to-morrow, I presume, like the rest of us?”

“No, Ploughshare, no, I have given up the chase—people are becoming more healthy, and patients decrease. True, corn is cheap, what then, horses are dear—and money, without patients, scarce.”

“Dang it now, Doctor,” this was a favourite expression of Ploughshare, “dang it, you’re joking, sir, patients are as thick as blackberries—but people looks to reason now-a-days, and drugs. While homehoppity, and all the ‘appities’ and isms you have started of late are enough to frighten a man to death, instead of curing him; much better have stuck to your boots and leathers, with

a little brandy and water at times, sir, than be always recommending water cures and the like o' that."

"Ploughshare speaks truly, 'dang it,'" said Mr. Selwyn, who now joined us, imitating his voice and manner, "all arrant humbug and unprofessional, believe me, fit subjects for old women and quacks—unworthy honourable men, belonging to an honourable profession. You will soon lose ground here, Lingforth, with your water cures, and isms, and so forth. Why old Dame Marsden, who lives in one of my cottages, actually refused a bottle of good old port I sent to her, hearing she was ill. What does all this mean, I said to my good housekeeper, Vaughan, does not the old girl require nourishment and strength—possibly she prefers brandy to port: if so, let her have it, by all means, or a dozen of porter or stout, or some good old ale."

"'To be sure she does, sir,' was her reply, 'but the Doctor gave positive orders that she should touch nothing but pure spring water, without it were possible to obtain

ariated water.' Ariated water, what on earth is that? I exclaimed—ariated humbug, I must see to this myself; so I filled my hunting flask with some right good French cognac, and down I went to the poor old woman's cottage—and sure enough, nourishment she required, and nothing more. The first thing I did was to pour half a wine glass of the brandy down her throat, which revived her wonderfully—she hummed and hawed, and spat a little, and so forth, but then spoke out firm, like a good hound on a scent in covert. Now, old Sally, said I, tell me truly what's the matter, what are your ailments—have you seen Lingforth of late? At the sound of your name she commenced the most pitiable lamentations, exclaiming, 'Oh! Lor, oh! Lor, I've been and done it, I've been and done it.' Done it, done what? said I, somewhat alarmed at her excitement. 'Oh! Lor, oh! Lor,' she continued, 'I been and took the spirits;' And very good spirits are they, I added, believe me, they were imported direct from France at forty shillings the gal-

lon, and have been ten years in my cellar. 'Wery good, wery good, and wery reviving, your honour—so I'll just taste another drop, and tell you all.' ”

Here the whole party laughed, as well they might, in which Lingforth joined. And I took the opportunity of asking what she did tell.

“Tell me, Fred,” continued Selwyn, “tell me—why the truth, boy ; she wanted wholesome food and nourishment, fresh air without, and warmth within—cold water for a poor old woman of seventy-eight, all balderdash. What does the Doctor give you, Marsden ? I asked. ‘Give me, your honour, why naught, your honour, but cold water and these wee bits of pills.’ Wee bits of pills, what pills ? ‘Why he calls them Globutes, sir.’ Globutes—let me have a look. On this she handed me a little box, filled with pills about the size of a pin’s head. Poison, I said, throwing the whole into the fire, poison—you’re a dead woman, that’s certain, as the sparks fly downwards.

‘Ah! Lor, ah! Lor,’ she groaned again; ‘but Mr. Lingforth is a good man, and would not poison a feeble old woman the like of me;’—no nor a young one either, when he acts as he usually does, with reason and common sense. He is a good man; but you see, he has given up hunting and taken to quackery.

“Now, listen to me, Lingforth—hunting enlarges a man’s heart, creates digestion, and consequently increases good temper, and does more to make a man healthy and wise, if not wealthy, than all the ‘oppotys’ and isms in the world. And as regards women, old or young, if instead of being gulled by some self-opiniated old quack or young quack, who takes their money and practises on their bodies, and cajoles them, they would listen to common sense and common reason, take air and exercise, wholesome food, have faith in the natural advantages and mercies which God has granted to them, and come out occasionally with the hounds, they would learn to enjoy life. So I told Marsden to take no more poison, but to send up to the

Hall for some good strong beef tea or soup, with the assurance it would never be denied to her ; and send also to me, I added, for a bottle or two of sound port, and see if I refuse you, that's all—and with that I left her. And now, Lingforth, no offence, I have spoken in plain language ; nevertheless, I pray you come to the Lodge, and join these boys, whom you ushered into the world—and a pleasant one is it if people were not ever endeavouring to make it otherwise ; forget for the evening your apothys and isms, and come and taste a bottle of first-rate claret, that will do your heart good."

"Thank you, Mr. Selwyn," replied the Doctor, "on my life I cannot refuse you, though forsooth half the men in the county would have called you out."

"Then they would have proved themselves exactly what I have been fancying you had become, but which I am heartily rejoiced to find you are not—for, believe me, I should regret, if I had an accident in the hunting field to-morrow, to send for any other practitioner to cure me. But wait a moment,

Fred, my boy—going home, aye—run, boy, run and stop him, for I want a word with your excellent father.” Having overtaken him at the moment he was about to step into the family coach, with my mother, Gussy, and the governante, who had all attended church that evening, I informed him that Mr. Selwyn wished to speak to him. “It is true,” he said, coming up. But first addressing my mother with, “Well, Mrs. Western, I hope you are not a convert to the medical fashion of the day—ariated water, globutes, and so forth, as old Marsden terms them; pray, send the poor woman some soup.”

“I will do as you desire as regards the soup be assured, but I am as likely to become an atheist or the pope, as to be a convert to the system you name.”

“I knew, dear Madam, you would do as I wished, and far more, if it was asked of you.—But, Gussy, my beauty, is that you? Miss Wilson, beware—or you will be indicted for woman-slaughter—the girl is muffled up like an Egyptian mummy, all the time longing to escape from the carriage. And

come with the boys to the Lodge to taste my turbot and sirloin, with just one cigar ere we go to bed."

"The boys going with you to eat turbot and smoke on Sundays! for shame, Mr. Selwyn."

"Now, dear Mrs. Western, listen,—the turbot was sent to me yesterday by a friend from Torbay, creamy and delicious; had it been kept till Monday, it would have been uneatable. My first desire, was to send it up to the Hall—but my second thoughts, oftentimes the best, told me it was as well not to allow your cook cause to be dissatisfied with me, knowing she likes her ease on Sundays. As for the sirloin, it is a right good English dish, and the Havannah will end in smoke. So, not being of a selfish disposition, I first abused the good Lingforth for his absurd derelictions from common sense, and then persuaded him to share the turbot and sirloin with the boys; you know we must not waste—that is, waste not, want not—good bye, Gussy, my beauty, half smothered as you are. Now then, Western, most gallant Lord

of Brooklands—a word ere we part. The hounds meet at Allington Gorse to-morrow, a rare covert for sport—and I have long promised the lads a treat, a promise I am bound to fulfil. So I have come over to Church rather ostentatiously in a phaeton and pair, with the sole intention of driving them back to the Lodge, then and there to have a jollification; what say you, Western, to be or not to be—which is the question, or I should rather say, what is your decision? A sirloin and etc. etc.—a warm bed, up by times—breakfast, and tallyho for the ‘Gos,’ as Ploughshare terms it.”

As usual, after a few objections, the Squire’s consent was given, with a promise to send over our hunting costumes, and the horses to covert. And we soon found ourselves in the good-natured Selwyn’s phaeton, Arty and I by his side, with the Doctor and the groom on the seat behind; the distance from Brooklands village to Mr. Selwyn’s Lodge, as he termed it, was barely three miles; and two well-stepping horses trotted over the ground in less than twenty

minutes — when having alighted, we were welcomed into a most cosy bachelor's morning-room, and soon quite at home.

“Now, lads,” said Selwyn, “it wants twenty-five minutes to feeding time—my governess, unlike dear Gussy’s, keeps me in order. I dare not be late for dinner a moment, save on hunting days—then I satisfy my appetite as may be. What say you, Lingforth, a glass of sherry, or curaçoa before dinner, which do you prefer, neither? Well, Barton gave us a short but right good sermon—got well into his subject, and quick over his fences—tickled the conscience though at times. So we are at home earlier than usual—I take ten minutes to put off my boots and put on my pantaloons and shoes, to say nothing of ablutions. So come, we have just fourteen minutes and a half to spare, and I always see to the comfort of my horses before I attend to my own. Moreover, I have a new hunter to show you.”

Nothing loath, we followed him to the stable, and truly was it a sight worth be-

holding to those who love the animal horse, and have a passion for field sports. The amiable character of Mr. Selwyn I have already in some measure endeavoured to sketch; he was kind and frank to excess, and generous to a fault. Moreover, a bachelor, though not an old one, and all around him was order and regularity combined with comfort, taste, and elegance. He required alone, a woman he loved, and who loved him well in return, to keep his sporting tastes within bounds, and he would have been apparently the happiest of men, and died in competence, if not riches—instead of a debtor. Why he was a bachelor the sequel will explain. But we now enter the stable yard—as neat as the most fastidious could desire, though possibly somewhat too large either for his wants or his fortune; nevertheless, it was, or rather its contents, the chief object of his existence; and there on non-hunting days, if not in the house, he might always be found.

Picture a somewhat extensive circular roof of sheet-iron resting on pillars, in the

centre of which was a fountain of pure water, forming around it a covered ride suitable for exercising horses during all weathers and in all seasons. This was a curiosity to all the country in those pleasant days, as doubtless it would be so now if it still exists, as was it a most desirable acquisition to the owner of a stud, and might be imitated to advantage. At some distance from this centre ride were ranged the stables, loose boxes and harness rooms, also the veterinary's room and servants' apartments—all as perfect with regard to order and cleanliness, as a well arranged house. The stalls, of which there were twelve, were large, airy, well-ventilated, and commodious—ample room for a horse to turn in, lay down, and exist in perfect comfort; far different from the ill-ventilated cramped pig-stys, intended for the comfort of such noble animals—behind the stalls there was ample room. The rack-chains and head-chains were as bright as silver, whilst here and there against the walls were ranged seats with high backs, on one of which Sel-

wyn passed half his life, admiring his horses; from whence in summer-weather he was wont to change to the edge of the fountain where seated, cigar in mouth, he would watch his favourites at exercise. In truth, could an artist have so beheld him, he would have made an admirable subject for a picture.

The loose boxes were as airy and commodious as the stalls, while all the other departments were well nigh perfect of their kind.

"Here we are, Lingforth," he exclaimed, as we entered the yard, "what think you of my alterations? Plenty of fresh-water, you observe, and ariated for all I know—at least, my horses drink in the open; here Fred, run to yon door with the brass knocker, and tell my master of the horse, 'Mr.' Anderson, as he likes to be termed, though scarcely such a Count as the Brooklands chief, that we desire a view of his live stock ere we try the turbot."

Now, Mr. Anderson, like many other men who have the care of a hunting stable, had a will of his own—a will, luckily for his

master, that he generally maintained, inasmuch as he was not only an admirable judge of a horse, which his master was not, although a first-rate rider to hounds, but he thoroughly loved the animal. To look at him, you would rather have judged him to have been an extremely neat country lawyer or curate, on small means, than a stud groom, save when on horseback; and then as a boy, at least, I always considered him perfection; as to person, in speech he was as dry as a red herring, and as brief as a flash of lightning—even to those he liked—and as boys, we were his especial favourites. But he now opens the door of his snuggerly and slightly raises his hat—behold a remarkably slight and neat made man, dressed entirely in black, as unlike what is generally supposed to be the costume of a stud groom as may be. What then, save as regards the cut of his coat—he rarely altered it—his trousers were close fitting to the leg, if legs they might be termed—his waistcoat was long even to the hips, while his unpretending coat was somewhat full in the skirts. This was his

Sabbath attire ; on week days it was little changed, save that the black coat gave place to an Oxford grey, which was rather more cut-away. On hunting days, however, when he rode Selwyn's second horse, which he frequently did from pure love of the chase, he sat before you on his hunter as I have already remarked, the very beau ideal of a sportsman. His leather breeches and boots were faultless as to shape and cleanliness, his spurs as bright as silver, his coat still dark, though his buckskins were as white as snow—in fact, had it not been for his cockade, which Selwyn insisted on his wearing, inasmuch as he was a Captain of Yeomanry—and to which he did not object, for with all his dryness he loved his master well—had it not, I say, for this military emblem of honourable servitude—now so desecrated—and always unusual to one in his place, scarcely a man in the field would have passed better muster.

If Anderson's attire was perfect, his small abode was in keeping ; for like his master, he was a bachelor, and liked to have

all things around him in order. Let us enter therein for a few minutes, ere we visit the stud. His sitting room was small, but more than snug. A bright fire burned on the hearth, above the mantel-piece of which there appeared his master's portrait in oils, on Mud-lark, a favourite hunter, whose powers and pace, through a heavy country, were rarely surpassed if equalled, with twelve stone on his back; it must have been a rare horse indeed to have beaten him. An easy arm-chair stood beside the fire-place, additional pictures being arranged around the room, all of a sporting character, and each telling many a tale of flood and field. Books were there also, that is, the Stud Book, the Racing Calendar, Sporting Magazine, White's Farriery, and several other works of a similar character, all however relating to hunting and horses. A pleasant abode, was it not? and well suited to him who dwelt therein—his profession and his wants: horses, hounds, and animals of all sorts were his delight; he lived among them, and literally for them; his knowledge of

their qualities, as their ailments, was also wonderful, and if not contradicted—though given at times to contradict—he was worth far more than his wages, at the head of a stable.

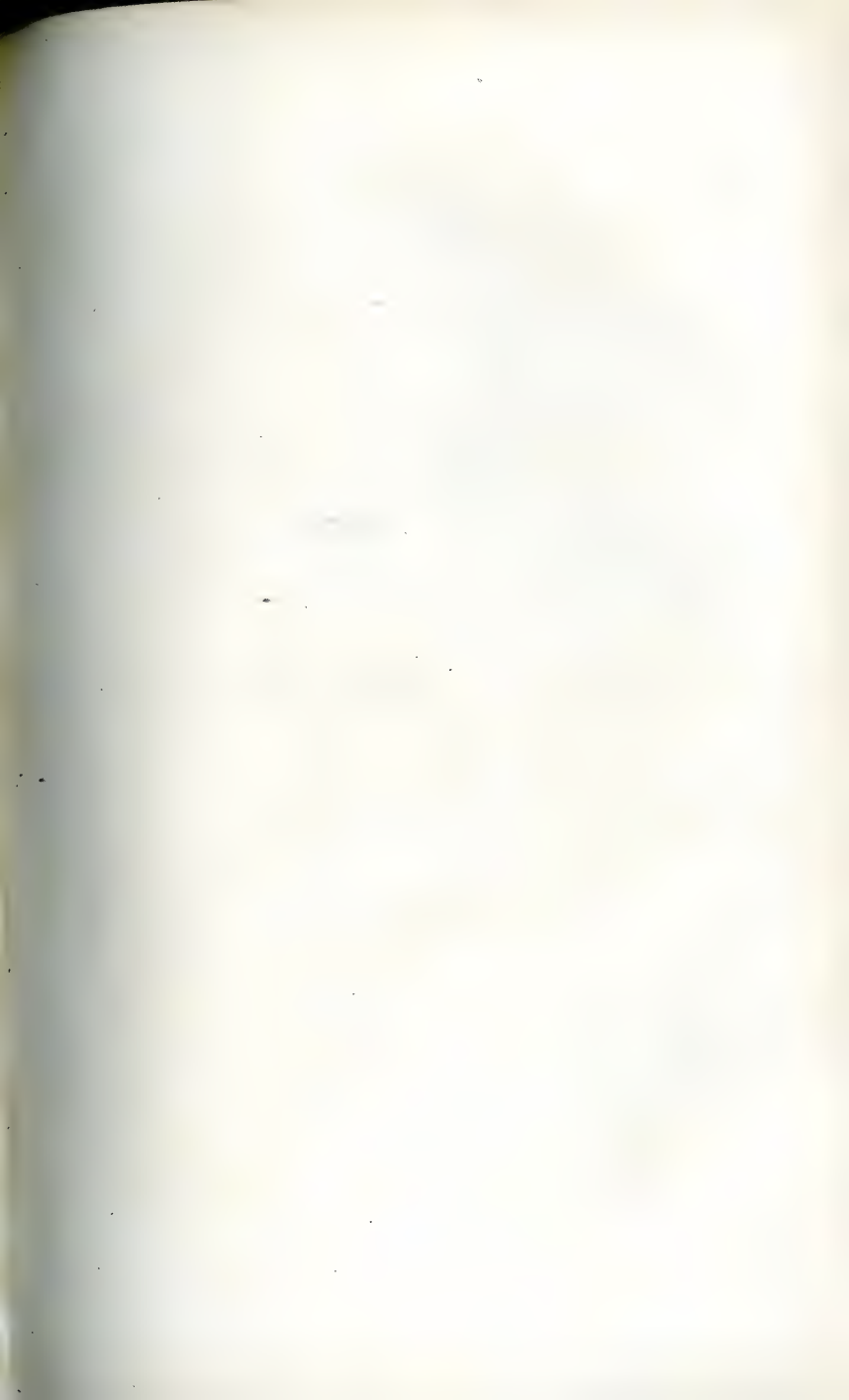
“A tidy box, indeed,” said Lingforth, “and pleasant withal, Mr. Anderson; your specimens of the animals you love so well are also well selected, and well prepared. A curious hoof, indeed, I observe: to what horse may that have belonged? a hole right through the frog, I see. Poor beast! what must have been your sufferings when you received such a wound!”

“You say truly, Sir; his sufferings were indeed severe, but happily soon over. I shot him an hour after the accident happened, though master wept like a child, as well he might at the loss of his favourite—the best horse in our stable; he knew, however, that he was lamed for life, and would suffer none after death. The hounds were running fast across the viaduct Meadows: master wished to take a short cut, and struck down Loucroft-lane, when passing the blacksmith’s,

the 'White Knight'—he was a white horse—dropped at once, and his sport was over for that day. On dismounting, he found a nail had perforated the frog, severed the naticular nerve, and thus went £150, and a first-rate animal."

"But this broken stake," said I, "what of that, Anderson? for you have nothing in your museum, but what tells a tale of the hunting field."

"True, master Fred, true; whoever possesses a good horse, and does not value him, had better part with him at once to those who do. I lived, as you know, Sir, with the Earl of Monkstoun, a true nobleman, and a first-rate sportsman, and 'consequently' an excellent master; he kept a stud such as few ever had the good fortune to cast their eyes on, or ever will again—sixteen of the right sort, all weight carriers—blood and bone. He had one called Tiny, the smallest horse to look at, at first sight, I ever beheld, and yet, when mounted, the largest to handle, and the best to ride in all England; for—which means as regards hunting the world—no moat was too wide, for Tiny—







no run too long—no gate in reason too high. For all that, he met with an accident.

“It was the end of a severe run with the Quorn. A large stake-bound fence right a-head, ground deep and slippery, scent burning, the fox dying, his Lordship was not the man to stop, and Tiny never gave in. But, alas! there was a fatal stake—it entered beneath the thigh, and with such force, as to pass right through to the very flank; for once poor Tiny rolled in the mud. This is the weapon that did the deed; luckily I was at hand on Nunky, another favourite horse of his Lordship’s—but he was not the man to leave a suffering animal, though he was leading the field at the time the accident happened; so together we managed, though with much difficulty, to pull out the stake and staunch the wound. I fancied the poor creature would have bled to death, but I was happily deceived; and he lived to hunt again, though he never afterwards fancied stake-bound fences as well as gates and brooks.”

“And with reason,” said Selwyn, “but

you must relate these tales another day, or the sirloin will be over-roasted, and Mrs. Vaughan will be out of humour for a week, while I shall not see my favourites to-night. Just nine minutes and a-half to spare—come along, Doctor ; come along, boys ; you may shut yourselves up with Anderson for a month at Midsummer, if you will it.”

Now I have already said that Anderson was a man of few words ; and so he was, save and except you managed to catch him in his own sanctum amidst his precious relics of the chase—and then, being once started, nothing could stop him till he ran fairly to the end of his tale. If the selected relic was a brush, and several were there, it was the subject for some splendid run ; a pad for another—a shoe which had been cast for another, and so on.

But the stable-door is thrown aside—no, I am wrong—that of loose box, No. 1—for Selwyn was wise enough never to stall his hunters in the summer season, and consequently had a loose box for every horse—not in field work—and beautiful boxes were

they, airy and commodious. "There's a horse, Lingforth, on the sick list for a day or two, when out few can beat him." And a splendid animal he was, up to fifteen stone, colour dark-brown, of admirable form and figure. We now proceeded to the stable, kept in most perfect order. Stall, No. 1, was empty, but the name of the horse we had just seen was over the manger in white letters, on a black ground, Topthorn. No. 2, was occupied by a grey mare, a great favourite, called the Duchess.

"That is the nag for me," I exclaimed, with boyish admiration.

"And why, Master Fred," drily observed Anderson. "I admire her small head, short legs, and strong back," I replied.

"All good points, Sir, but something more is required for a hunter, look here, Sir."

I looked at No. 3 stall, and observed a horse called Parchment, an ill-formed and apparently ugly roan, at least, so he appeared to me as he stood in the stable. "You are joking," I said, "the horses are not to be compared."

Much you know of the matter, his eye seemed to imply. "May be," he replied, "master rides him to-morrow: and if your new purchase, Friar Tuck, which Bradly so admires, sees his tail twice through the run, which we shall have if this weather lasts—why, Sir, you will learn in future to look at an animal's points more than his beauty."

"What of number four, Copelands, I observe you call him," said Lingforth, "a nice brown horse, and I imagine a fast one."

"Wrong again," said Anderson, "all wrong, Sir, the slowest horse we have in the stud—slow as the town he came from—and that's Hereford; for all that he is a beauty, and so is the county of his birth, and that's Herefordshire. But he is sure, sure as a real friend when found—and no fence can pound him."

No. 5 was a large bony animal, a dark chestnut with white legs, who carried no flesh, and was therefore called Bones.

"There's an animal," said my younger fraternity, "give him to the hounds—I'll have none of him."

"That you won't," replied Anderson, "without Squire Western is prepared to fill up a cheque for a large amount, though Bones he may be called."

"And is not unlike Bonaparte," added his owner, "for nothing will stop him—not even a fence as big as a barricade." And having looked at all his horses, while we were examining these few, he said—"Come, you must look at the rest of my stud another day, it is now getting dark, and our time is up—so tally-ho for the turbot. After dinner I will tell you how I got the animal, Bones, into my stable—from whence I should be sorry to see him depart."

Reluctantly we bid adieu to these noble horses; Mr. Anderson had orders for the morning, and we proceeded to discuss the good cheer so kindly and generously set before us.

CHAPTER XIV.

How many there are who consider, that to be a sportsman, or I will say, a mere lover of hunting horses and hounds, is to be a species of illiterate cigar-smoking, wine-bibbing after dinner, dozing, coarse-talking, immoral, vulgar human being, glorying in the name of Englishman. In other days, such may have been, even now may occasionally be too true.

But I would fain hope, and do most truly believe, such persons are the exceptions to the rule. At all events, my pen speaks of real sportsmen and gentlemen who love hunting — for all the exciting charms which it offers as regards air, exercise on nature's real theatre of enjoyment, and truly more

so, for their love of animals and the noblest horses and dogs. Among such men are to be found the highest in intellect, the truest in heart, the most noble in mind, as the most refined and courteous in manner—men who shoot, hunt, and course, and yet rule the state as the hearts of those of their homes. If Mr. Selwyn was not of the former, truly was he of the latter; for a more thorough or true-hearted gentleman never gave welcome to friends beneath a roof where hospitality and amiability reigned: and much as he loved horses and hunting, still more did he love that those he welcomed to his home should leave it as they ever did, with feelings of friendship for its owner, as of pleasant recollection of its entire comfort and refinement.

There may be some, indeed there are thousands whose tastes, occupations, or necessities, compel them year after year to inhabit great cities, or commercial and manufacturing towns, or even that which is termed a county town; men and women with sense and feeling, who seldom range

beyond the limits of its boundaries. The country and all its endless charms are to them a theory which imagination alone tends to brighten or overcloud. When the sun of summer gladdens all nature, and even the sparrow chirps merrily on the house-tops, then doubtless, many a heart yearns for the cowslip bedecked meads, the glorious woods of old England echoing with the nightingale's thrill, as the thrush and blackbird's melody. They then dream of hay-fields and hay-making as of harvest-homes, and long to verify the truth of the following most touching and simple lines, written by a much esteemed friend, which allude to the fact of having heard the nightingale sing in the day-time :—

“ While brightly thou art glistening,
River, in the sunny ray,
Enchanted I am listening
To the wild bird's gushing lay.

In full, deep notes of sadness,
How she lifts her voice of love,
And seems to chide the gladness
Of the gay birds in the grove.

Bird of the heart, thy singing
Has a thrilling tone for me—
Like angel-harper bringing
Celestial melody.

Whence was that cadence given ?
Didst thou fly on soaring wing
Through the starry paths of heaven,
There to hear the angels sing ?

And thence return to cheer us
With those whisperings of bliss,
Which bring Heaven's brightness near us,
In a world so dark as this.

Just as we on faith's fleet pinion,
Might list before the throne,
To the glory and dominion
Of the Holy Lord alone :

Then back to earth and sorrow,
Chanting, ever night and day,
Of the bright and glorious morrow,
When all grief shall pass away."

But the rigours of winter returned—to
them all the joys of a country life vanish.
The wind howls without, the snow flakes fall
thickly—the bitter frost hardens the earth,
or the pouring torrent soaks it. 'Tis then

they draw closer and closer the thick curtains, heap coals on the already blazing fire, draw nearer and nearer to their hearth's home, and thank God if Christian gratitude has place in their hearts, that they are safe amid the habitations of the multitude protected from the wintry blasts of desolate heaths or woodlands, or to use a practical term, in close proximity, save the partition of a brick wall, to their fellow-men. To such as these, and how many are there, England's smiling plains and hunting grounds have nought of excitement or regret. Hunting to them is a paradox, a thing unknown but in name—and if the word be mentioned, 'tis only to wonder how men can be so mad as to spend their money and risk their lives in jumping over ditches and gates, and what not, after a pack of hounds, instead of sitting comfortably at home—in a smoky city, or a dull provincial town, with duller companions, and their feet on the fender themselves, doing nothing. While shooting is supposed to be equally absurd—a mere waste of powder, shot, and shoe leather.—fatiguing to a degree,

sometimes disgustingly wet, at others disagreeably cold : and for what, to kill a hare or two, or a bird or two, which could be purchased in the market for money, and provided by the poulterers. In fact, sport to them is either a cruelty or a madness—loss of time or loss of means. Well, every man to his taste, and God for us all, say I.

Now permit me to introduce you into Mr. Selwyn's withdrawing room ; he stands with his back to a bright fire, and as Englishmen not seldom do, even in the best regulated families, the tails of his coat are a wee bit elevated. While to the right and left of him, in two soft and delightful chintz covered arm-chairs, we brothers sat, admiring his active person, now adorned as gentlemen are generally adorned at the dinner-hour. Lingforth, the worthy Esculapius, half reclines on an ottoman close at hand, reading the newspaper ; while our host pulls down his long white waistcoat, and pulls out his watch. A neat plainly attired servant enters, and announces dinner to the moment ; bravo !

Mrs. Vaughan, no house can be well regulated if cooks do not keep time, or their mistresses lay idling in bed, while the muffins get cold. Now, Fred, tally-ho, the roast beef of old England for ever ; come along, Doctor, beef is better than globutes any day in the week, and more nourishing.

Are you hungry ? no ; well read on, and get an appetite. Yes ; well shut the book and go to luncheon, though it is not a legitimate meal. For now the drawing-room is empty, save from the presence of Eliza the housemaid, who is heaping more coals on the already blazing hearth, and putting things in order.

For the satisfaction of those who imagine a bachelor's home in a hunting county to be a sort of rustic hermitage of disorder and confusion, let me assure them, nothing could be more cheerful than this bright and charming apartment, which looked over the rich vale of Brooklands, from which, as I have already said, it was an easy distance—it was neither large nor lofty. But for all that, it looked as if it had been prepared for the

reception of some loved and loving woman : so elegant and yet so comfortable were all its arrangements.

A light pink and white satin paper adorned the walls, while all the sofas, ottomans, chairs, and couches were covered, pattern in chintz to match—over the white marble mantel-piece a Venetian framed glass was placed, while all the additional ornaments were in keeping ; and, though winter-time, some flowers were there—fine proof that a sportsman is not even so rough in his tastes as some would give him credit for. Opening into this room was a delightful oak-panelled small library, filled with well selected books ; and all the remainder of the house, from attic to cellar, was equally agreeable and unpretending. Such was a sportsman's home, and such may still be found, where the presence of fair woman adds to it graces.

The dear old Squire of Brooklands was everlastingly joking our friend Selwyn on the subject of his truly pleasing and elegant home. But in later days it was one of pain, on which I shall hereafter dwell, and the

moment it became so, it was for ever dropped. I fancy even now I see my dear old Dad sitting in that very room, the evening previous to a favourite meet with the Earl's hounds within a few miles of the Lodge; he had come there at the express wish of Selwyn; to dine and sleep, as Selwyn said, to meet a few friends, as a house warming—for his home had then been recently embellished. There he sat in a luxurious arm-chair, awaiting the announcement of dinner, admiring the room, and good-humouredly joking with all around him.

“By St. Hubert, Charley, my boy,” familiarly addressing Selwyn, “you have a rare taste for upholstery, as well as for hunting—who suffers, Dowbiggin or Gillow—a rare combination of colours and comfort, I must admit, aye; I fancy there is truth in the village gossip, and petticoats in the distance, and no mistake.”

“In the distance, indeed,” said Selwyn, “but not here as yet.”

“Well, well, Charley, I wish you all happiness in your choice: select a good wife

—love her as well as you do the noble animals in your stable, and she will have no reason for discontent. But, mark you, this is a home fit for a queen.”

“Not too good for her I shall select, if I have the good fortune to get one at all, Western.”

And this, with such an absence of merriment in his face, that, boy that I was, it struck me there must be something, as my Dad had humourously said, in the distance; and so it proved, to the undying sorrow of poor Selwyn, who but for that might have lived to read these lines, and to know how deeply I felt for him, and how truly I esteemed him, both in my early years and afterwards as a man.

But dinner is announced, so let us peep into the dining-room — most truly was it perfection of comfort; a bright Christmas fire-blazed on the hearth, the dark curtains were closely drawn, and the lights burned brilliantly in the centre of a round table laid for four, but at which eight might conveniently have dined. The sides of this

room, chiefly embellished by well-executed paintings of favourite horses and sporting incidents, while over the fire-place appeared the gallant host's portrait on Parchment, taking Low Bottom Brook in his stride—twenty-four feet from bank to bank—and thus, with the exception of two others, pounding the whole field. Around this table we sat with light hearts and good appetites. On the right of Selwyn a dumb waiter, now seldom used, was seen, his only in-door servant being in attendance. A splendid turbot was placed on the board with lobster-sauce, fit for so fresh a turbot—with potatoes, such as I grieve to think are almost gone from the land we live in.

“Now,” said our hospitable entertainer, after we had done double duty to the fish—“try that sherry—people say it is tolerable, judge for yourselves, young fellows; and do you, Lingforth, tell me what you think of it—come no homœopathy to-night—drink like a man—no good wine in moderation can hurt any one.” Lingforth did drink and pronounced the wine excellent. The turbot

was removed, and replaced by a sirloin : such as Gloucestershire and its neighbouring county, Herefordshire, can produce, while a roast pheasant was also added to the good cheer; and we once more set-to in good earnest.

“ Now,” said Selwyn, “ a roast pheasant and a roast sirloin, are not, I fancy, according to the order of things, and Mrs. Vaughan rebelled—but I am not a second-course man, and I prefer game to meat. A turbot and pheasant with a bottle of claret, such as I hope to offer you, is a dinner fit for an Emperor—if not, for an Alderman, what say you ?” And thus passed a pleasant and excellent repast, well cooked, well served, and given with all generous hospitality. Some Stilton and a rampion, we drew our chairs around the fire, and with many a hope expressed for a good run on the morrow, and many a tale of horse and hound, which I must leave for the next Chapter, we lads drank lightly and went to bed—but scarcely to sleep—if so, surely we dreamt of the coming sport.

CHAPTER XV.

THE excellent and agreeable dinner over, to which we did ample justice, much to the satisfaction of our host, who having not a particle of selfishness in his whole heart, loved to see his guests enjoy themselves ; we drew, as I have said, our chairs around the fire, and a pleasant evening commenced.

“ Now, Doctor,” exclaimed Selwyn, “ I give you joy, you are a man again—on my life I was fancying all dinner-time you would reject either turbot or sirloin, at all events the lobster-sauce as inconsistent with the homœopathic system of digestion ; but in good truth you played your part right well,

and heartily glad was I to see you do so. Having, however, done your duty by the dinner, follow up the charge and taste this claret—drink a bottle, or a half dozen if you like—and you will sleep soundly, and by St. Hubert, or I am much mistaken, we shall have you out with the hounds to-morrow; aerated water I have none in the house, though there is plenty of brandy and spring-water at your command. By the bye, it has just occurred to me to ask you a question; were I to put a wig on and announce myself to the world as a barrister, what would the legal profession say? In like manner I do not understand how the medical profession, men who have spent money and years of toil to gain even a tolerable footing in their calling, should submit to be hustled by quacks. Are there no legislators prepared to ask the question of right or wrong, or are we all so benighted as to be ever searching for some novelty, even at the risk of our lives?"

"I do not admit the quackery," replied Lingforth, "homœopathy is a new era in

the science of medicine, which will sooner or later rise in the estimation of the public or fall, according to its merits. Practical surgeons, however, we must still have, but I fancy the skill of the one may be blended with the science of the other, and with qualified men it would be no quackery."

"Well, well, there is something reasonable in what you say, but here, taste this bottle, and for the future eschew humbuggery."

While we cracked our walnuts and swallowed the cool claret,—sipped, is not the word—a most agreeable pastime, Selwyn proposed to give us an account of the manner in which he had become possessed of two of his horses. "Bones, for instance, the horse which when the ground is light, few can beat either as to pace or distance; and should it be heavy, what then, he can live as long as most of them. Well, I got him for a trifle, but it is not a trifle would part us. You know I have a small property on the borders of the Severn—it consists chiefly of water meadows, and is let to a grazier, old Tom Norton by name—a jolly old fellow, in

fact, who loves a mug, a pipe and a joke, as well as any man in all England. When the weather sets in hard, I frequently go down to his farm in order to have a shot at the wild-fowl which there abound, and generally terminate the day's sport with a good hearty luncheon at old Tom's, as we call him, who has orders to write me a line when the ducks are plentiful; so accordingly, I received one morning the following laconic epistle.

“Dere Muster Selvin,

“The Dukes be comed by hindrids—please come down yerself, and shut a few on 'um. There bees also some Guses, and a swarm o' snipes. Missus ar got a noice soid or beacon as ever you seed, and we is about to kill a porker, so you'll ha chitlings, black puddins, and a grisken. Your expecting humble servant,

TOM NORTON.”

“This charming letter, together with a severe bleak frost, decided me to pass a morning with the ‘Dukes’ and ‘Guses.’ So accordingly I started for the marshes well provided with guns and ammunition; no sooner arrived there, however, than a thaw commenced, as soft and as rapid as the frost

had been severe and apparently lasting ; and as you well know I never by any chance fail to meet the hounds when possible, I determined not to linger. However, I had a fair day's sport, bagged two couple and a half of ducks, one gander, a few couple of snipes, and a hunter—not a bad day, was it—to say nothing of the griskin and some admirable black-puddings, the produce of the bacon-pig, which Tom had slaughtered in honour of my visit, and much to the gratification of my inward man. Luncheon over, I ordered my dog-cart, with the intention of returning home—and having lighted a cigar, and handed another to Tomaso, who said, ' he'ed ha none such,' as he preferred a clay and birds-eye, we walked out into his straw yard in order to see a handsome young bull which he had recently purchased. As we were admiring the animal, I heard a whistle and then a shout, and conceive my astonishment at beholding a dark chestnut horse clear the gate with a bound like an antelope, and land without effort within a few yards of where we were standing.

Seated on his back was a jolly fat butcher, weighing full fourteen stone, dressed in a full-sleeved shirt of true blue."

"A right good horse, and a plucky rider," I said, "and no mistake: Butcher, who taught him to jump; and what may be his pedigree?"

"Pedigree, Zur," he replied, "what may that be? I never heard the word afore."

"Well, may be so, good man; in plain terms, then, what horse was his father—what mare his mother!"

"Oh, you wants to know about his birth and parentage; well, as far I know, Sir, his dad was Woltigneur by a wexatious animal, and his mother were a thorough bred, belonging to Lord Hexeter. I am told he be true bred; but all I know, Sir, is, that I took him for a debt, and nare an horse I knows of can beat him in jumping, galloping or trotting, though I am not a feather weight, am I, Sir?"

"No, indeed," I replied, laughing, "without it be a feather bed, blanket, and bedstead—all together." This he took very good

humouredly, when I added, "In truth, you sat your colt over that gate in a manner which ought at once to secure you the knighthood of the marrow-bones and cleavers, though, forsooth, knighthoods are no great honour as they are now disposed of. But tell me something more of the gallant chestnut."

"Well, Sir; I took him, as I told you, in payment of a debt; and my missus took him into her affections, doubtless because he were so thin, whereas I am somewhat lusty, as you perceive; and some how or another, though, when we were a courting she said she admired a man what carried flesh, and could not abide the lean kind, she has much changed of late, and frequently now declares that I really be like a Lord Mayor, pertikerly on a hot day, when I wastes a little."

"Does she, indeed; well that's not pleasant," I observed; "but I perceive you are rather lusty. What then, doubtless your appetite is good."

"That is it," he exclaimed; "and so is

my meat of its kind. But the horse—I gave him to my missus for her own pertikeler riding. And she did ride him a time or two—once to Church, and once to market, and so forth; but he were too much for her, so I determined to sell him, and he is now for sale.”

On this I examined him well, and at once observed that, although he was in miserable condition, that his eye was clear, his constitution apparently good, his legs free from blemish, and a five-year old; and although not precisely the horse I prefer, I felt he would be altogether another animal in my stable. But I held my tongue on that point, and shewed no disposition to purchase.

“So he was too much for your missus, was he butcher? How so?”

“Why you see, Sir. She had some heggs which she was a carrying to market; the morning was cold, and she had mounted Woltigeur, with a large cloak on, which I thinks tickled him behind at times; then there was a basket of heggs on one side, with fowls a cackling and ducks a quacking

on the other. So as she was going down Gunner's Hill, she put her hand on the crupper, to hold on, you see; and as she did so he kicked hup behind. The first kick were nothing of a kick, merely a raise of the posterity—I mean posterior—but she clung tighter and tighter, and then the horse kicked up behind with a vengeance, and kicked my missus clean over his head into the mud, dislokated the ducks, determined some of the poultry, and smashed the heggs to smithereens.

“After this she vowed she would not ride the horse again, nor would she keep any more poultry, or have any more heggs, or have any more to do in the farming line, but stick to a fat pony, crotchiting, and butchering, the two latter quite fashionable, aint they, Sir?

“But as I said before, Squire Selvin, for I knows your name, Sir, as this is your land; the animal's for sale.”

“Well, butcher, I want a horse at a low price for hack work, and may be yours might suit me, notwithstanding his pro-

pensity to kick up behind ; so name your figure, and if reasonable we may deal."

"All right. I am a straight forward and fairish sort of a man, as times go. No gammon about me. You have seen some of the animal's good qualities, Sir ; and I don't look for any great market ; a pound or two more than I gave for him, and he is yours ; twenty pounds was the money he cost me, say twenty-two, and he is yours ; more, as he came into the yard, so shall he go out of it—over that gate."

"Well, your demand is not an unfair one ; however, twenty pounds is about the mark, but to put the matter on a fair footing, ride him over the gate again. If he land safe on the other side, I will toss you up, twenty or two-and-twenty, and pay you on the spot."

"Done, Sir ; it's a bargain," he replied, and forthwith he mounted, charged, and went clean over the gate, again jumping safely some yards beyond it.

"So far you have gained your money,"

I said, "now then," spinning a half-crown in the air, "heads or tails."

"Woman for ever," he cried, laughing loudly.

"And woman it is," I replied, "His Majesty's head, and no mistake; may it long be the coin of the realm." And forthwith I entered Tom Norton's house, and gave him a cheque for the amount. The horse became mine, and an admirable beast he has proved. I mounted a lad I had brought with me in the dog cart on his back; he shewed no disposition to kick, and I drove home well satisfied with my bargain."

"A lucky purchase, indeed," chimed in Lingforth, "indeed a rare horse in the field, but it is seldom, I fancy, that you suit yourself for such a price."

"Rarely, rarely, I assure you; there is but one other horse in my stable that cost me less than a hundred. That one became mine under far different circumstances truly, and for one tenth the sum, and yet I have ridden him for three seasons without one fall, but to select his country—stone walls cannot be

too high for him, or they are no longer stone walls, a deep country can only subdue him, and few are the horses that it will not subdue. But you have had enough of horses for to-night. No. Well, then, ring the bell, Fred, and let us have one more bottle of claret, a cigar, with something hot, and then prepare by a good night's rest for the run of to-morrow."

The bell was rung, the claret was placed on the table, we filled our glasses—somewhat precocious for Eton boys, I hear some one say—and Selwyn proceeded to tell us how he had obtained the Parson:—

"I had gone down to visit a friend in a fair vale of Devon, as he termed his locality in Devonshire, during the dead season—peaches ripe—thermometer at 80°, bathing machines in full employment, and young ladies donkey riding mad.

"It was a pleasant abode, amid roses and blooming myrtles—he had a fair and charming wife, and moreover was a sportsman, and given to hospitality—so he gathered friends around him at his beautiful home;

and, although hunting there was none, and the weather was hot enough to fry bacon, we got on however pleasantly and merrily enough. On one occasion there dined at St. Michael's, better had it been called St. Myrtle's, among others a country curate, a young man fresh from Oxford, and, to do him justice, a most agreeable companion. But he had committed a great and irretrievable mistake in life, or his parents had done so for him, in as much as having completed an University education, that is, learnt a little Latin, and imbibed considerable sporting tastes—he had taken orders instead of purchasing a commission in the heavy dragoons, and was now performing the duties of an aged parson, who preferred passing the latter days of his life on the eight hundred a-year which he received in tithes, for doing nothing, while my young acquaintance received the remaining eighty, for doing every thing. His pastor and master was an aged, florid, amiable clergyman of the old school, who looked on a Bishop in lawn sleeves as heathens do on a golden idol, preached

short, and, as he believed orthodox sermons, was kind to his parishioners, and loved a good bottle of port, and a nap after dinner; whether he did much good as a parish priest, I will not presume to say—enough that he did little harm, and as things went this is much in his favour. He gave occasionally to the poor, including the Methodists, as all were then termed who thought fit to pray to God elsewhere but in a church—and, although he professed to hate them, he did not persecute them. Such was the man to whom the young curate had bound himself, mentally and physically, for fourscore pounds per annum. But, as I have said, he or his worthy papa had totally mistaken his place in the race to California; no man that I ever cast my eyes on was more fitted than was Curate Longfellow, for by such name the residents in the neighbourhood humourously termed him, for a heavy dragoon—of the genii sporting. *Imprimis*: He stood six feet one without his shoes, had arms that would have wielded a sabre like a wand, and legs far more formed to mount a powerful

hunter, or a heavy dragoon horse, than a pulpit—moreover, his countenance was bright and open as a May morning, and withal he had a heart which scarce belied the expression of his face. Had his Rector lived till later days, he would doubtless have had a leaning towards Rome and Romanists, fasted on Fridays on cod-fish and oyster-sauce, omelets and artichokes. But he died, good man, previous to the Era Pusyandos, and happily for himself as his parishioners, ere the Tractarian sword flashed from the scabbard to do battle among heretics. Unluckily for poor Longfellow he swore to the Thirty-nine Articles at the very period when the first wax candle was lighted, as the signal for war to the knife among churchmen. And being an enthusiast in every thing he undertook—and, to do him justice, I believe an honest one, if not wise, in his enthusiasm—he charged home (mentally) at once into the thick of the Tractarian advancing columns, and planted the standard of Evangelism on the weathercock of his parish church. The wind, however, did not ever

blow to the east or to the west, according to his wishes or those of his flock. And at length he found out, as many better men have done, that extremes in all things are odious and hateful, and so he sat himself down, as he should have done at first, and preached as he practised—Christian moderation and charity.

“However, I am going from my point, and talking of priests instead of horses; help yourself, Lingforth—good, is it not? ‘First-rate, but I have had enough.’ Nonsense, finish the bottle, while I finish my story. ‘Well, there is no resisting such claret as this.’ Bravo! Doctor, bravo!

“But talking of the Parson—the horse not the curate—though I must make the latter speak of the former. At the period when we met, he was a first-rate enthusiast, and would have parted with the hair off his head in the cause where fancied duty led him; in fact, like a man mounted on a pulling horse, who charges a wall against his will, and finds himself in a gravel-pit on the other side. He was for putting down

all things at once, and taking up others equally hastily for conscience sake. His first struggle was to subdue his passion for sporting—possibly the last he might have retained in moderation. His guns were sold in fear that he might be induced to accept an invitation for a few days' shooting. His fishing rods and flies were given away; and lastly his horses, heretofore the pleasure of his life, and pride of his existence, were sold. Thus the poor fellow reasoned by acting, for he was true and firm as steel, when he thought he was right.

“‘It is not well for a parson to hunt,’ he would say—‘hitherto I have kept my horses as a duty: the parish is large, and I have two churches to attend; but I must part with them—a pony will do the work, and keep me out of temptation.’

“Nonsense, I replied; if you can afford to keep them, why not—air and exercise are as healthful and necessary to a clergyman as any of us; and if you do take a look at the hounds occasionally, what then.

“‘Hounds!’ he exclaimed—‘I own the

passion I once had for the chase; but what has hunting to do with preaching or teaching the Gospel, this is my duty—and hunting I must give up, though I see little harm in the noble pastime, when other duties do not interfere.”

“Well, well, it evinced firmness of character, and more, an excellent spirit,” said Lingforth.

“And both had he in an eminent degree. But to terminate my tale. I met him a few mornings subsequent to the dinner-party at St. Michael’s, riding a nice looking grey, which however appeared to go somewhat tenderly under his weight—he pulled up, and we shook hands. A neat hack, I said, is it one of those you desire to part with?

“‘Precisely so,’ he observed, ‘I was on my way to St. Michael’s to show him to you, knowing your love for the animal, horse. As I do not desire a high price, it may suit you.’

“Permit me to handle him, Parson,” I said, examining his points, “and with your permission I will just try him round yon

meadow, and over those hurdles; can he fence?"

" 'You are perfectly welcome,' he replied, 'poor beast, he is an admirable fencer, though I fancy rather unsound just at present; how he became so I know not, for within the last week he was perfectly sound. However, the sum I ask for him will, I trust, put him into hands who will cure him.' On this I mounted, galloped steadily round a large deep fallow field, over a rather awkward fence, and then over the hurdles. The horse went well, and jumped admirably. On dismounting, I perceived at once that the lameness was caused by a disease termed greasy heels—painful to the animal, but not incurable. A nice little horse, and a free goer, I observed, but a hack and hurdle jumper is not precisely the animal for high stone walls and brooks. What is your demand?"

" 'Try him at any fence you like,' he replied, 'the more cramped and difficult, the more steadily will he jump. He stands a trifle above fifteen hands; look at his

back, and loins, and legs, and above all at my length and weight.' Here he became animated as he described a run with Mr. Trelawny's hounds, in which he had figured as one of the leading men, over the hills of Dartmoor, and across one of the most impracticable vales of Devon, whither he had been carried without a single mistake, at best pace. 'You ask his price; I do not warrant him, and all I require is a pony.'

"Well, that's no large sum at all events, unsound though he be; no man can lose by giving twenty-five pounds for such a horse who can ride him with hounds."

"'Twenty-five pounds,' he exclaimed, 'who said any such sum? not I. But I am no longer a sporting character, and forget that in sporting phraseology a pony means pounds. I literally mean a pony; I want, in fact, a quiet animal to carry me to church, and around my parish. And if you will select me one the horse is yours.'

"Are you in earnest, Longfellow."

"'Decidedly, Squire.' Such was the conversation that passed between us.

“I need scarcely add that I accepted the horse on such terms, sent him the following day into Gloucestershire, where he was soon cured and christened, and has proved as good a horse as he was said to be. However, it was not so easy to find a suitable pony; for I was desirous to obtain a thoroughly good one, and would have given willingly twenty-five pounds; however, one turned up which pleased him much in his own neighbourhood, so he wrote to me, and demanded ten pounds, which was forthwith sent.

“And now, boys, to bed; no smoking, youngsters, whatever you do at Eton; that I have faithfully promised Western; breakfast on the table at eight—I need scarcely add to the moment. Lingforth come to my sanctum; you have proved to be the man I thought you. The moon shines brightly, no danger on your road home.”

CHAPTER XVI.

AT a pleasant spot where the roads meet which lead from two not unimportant market towns of Gloucestershire, almost in the centre of a noble Duke's hunt—well and deservedly esteemed for his courtesy and amiable bearing alike to high and low, rich and poor—the traveller will pass through the retired and not unpicturesque village of Yatcombe, at least, by such name I shall speak of it. Like most other rural villages, ere the advent of railways changed the face of the country, it was little, perhaps never heard of save by the immediate inhabitants of the neighbour-

hood, or the members of the hunt, and to those solely from its being one of the localities where the hounds occasionally met. It had little to recommend it, either as regards position or peculiar beauty. An ancient church, overshadowed by some equally ancient elm trees, a public house, the residences of a few farmers, and sundry cottages, together with a turnpike almost in the centre of the village, at the meeting of the roads, was all it could boast of—quite sufficient for the requirements of its limited circle. Ere the church clock had sounded the hour of ten, however, on a fair hunting morning of January, 18—, it presented a scene of unusual bustle and excitement. Had an artist been there well might his pencil have been used in portraying the various groups of horses and men who had assembled. The principal and decidedly the most interesting party, however, were gathered together in an open space in front of the humble hostelry—then called the Foxhound, but now, I fancy, the Punch-bowl—with an inscription under-

neath the sign, doubtless from the pen of the landlord :—

“Whoever is a thirsty, and travels this here way,
Is right welcome for to drink, if quite ready for to pay.”

The group consisted of a young and lovely woman, warmly, yet elegantly clad, who half reclined in a well-built phaeton, drawn by two beautiful white ponies, with flowing manes and tails, set off to advantage by their neat black harness ; of these ponies she held the reins, while a perfectly attired groom boy, with the bridle of a handsome thorough-bred horse he had been riding thrown around his arm, stood at their heads. By her side were two of the most interesting and beautiful children I ever beheld ; the one a little blue-eyed girl about five years old, who laughed and chattered with delight at the animated scene around her ; while the dark eyes of her brother, who was probably some two years older, seemed to flash and sparkle with excitement at the scene, as in expectation of the arrival of the hounds. But I was known to them, and loved them

well, and possibly in my eyes they were perfection. Near to this carriage were several horsemen, some mounted, others dismounted, the majority in the blue uniform of the hunt, while others wore the truly English sporting costume, scarlet. There was no mistaking them or the position to which they belonged—they were gentlemen—not exhibiting the slightest foppery or eccentricity of costume, while their horses evinced as much high breeding as themselves.

Close by the carriage, with his hand on the shoulder of the young girl, stood a grey-haired, aristocratic man, attired in the hunt costume. While near him sat gracefully, on horseback, a young man whose coming moustache pronounced him, in those days when such military distinction was not the vogue among shop-boys and lawyers' clerks, an officer of the household cavalry or hussars, others were scattered here and there. Dog-carts and phaetons drove into the village from the two roads; men were dismounting from their hacks, and mounting their hunters; great coats were thrown aside to

grooms ; farmers on every species of horse, and men of every position, as on every sort of animal, from the neighbouring and adjacent cities, thronged the village thoroughfare, and blocked up the road—in fact, it was a delightful hunting morning, and, above all, the hounds were to draw Allington Gorse. True to the appointed time, half-past ten, only a few minutes sooner,—following our Dad, who was mounted on Corbeau, and Mr. Selwyn, on Parchment—I on the new horse, Friar Tuck, with Arty on Silver-tail, the horses having been sent on the previous evening to a friend's house in the neighbourhood—we rode into the village. As we approached the carriage, the little boy exclaimed, “Mama, mama, here comes Squire Western on Corbeau ;” and, as the lady held out her hand to welcome my father, Mr. Selwyn, and my brother, and I, were greeted by the assembled group—

“Bravo !” said one, “here is Western and his boys all the way from Brooklands, we must have sport. How are you, lads—how are you, Selwyn? A new horse, by St.

George, Fred, where did your father get him? Parchment, I see, Selwyn; well you are come in force to do battle with the Duke's men. What sport in the Earl's country since the frost broke, aye?" And then the merry joke and hearty laugh went round, till the voice of the bright-eyed boy exclaimed, "The hounds, the hounds." And he who has led them to death and victory over many a well fought field, touching his cap as he passed the assembled horsemen, passed on through the village at the head of as splendid a pack of hounds as ever were cheered o'er the vales of merry England. The rear was brought up by two well-mounted whips, when a cavalcade of more than one hundred horsemen closed in and followed in their track. After this body of cavalry came the pony-carriage, escorted by several well-mounted gentlemen, among whom our own party numbered—and I witnessed on that day a larger number of fine horses in the hunting-field than I ever recollect before or since, never having the good fortune to visit Melton.

For two miles we jogged along merrily on the high road ; when, turning into a grass-field bordered by a spinny of willows, the huntsman marshalled his forces ready for the fray, and awaiting his Commander-in-chief, the Duke of Gloucestershire. Brief was the time we had to wait, ere his Grace, accompanied by two well-dressed and well-known Leicestershire men, drove up at a rapid pace. And having cordially greeted the Lord of Brooklands, as he familiarly termed him, for well were such men suited, he then gave the word to the huntsman, who touched his cap, and in another minute every hound was in the spinny ; possibly this draw was unnecessary, but on the principle of a good general, who never leaves an enemy in the rear—doubtless he was right.

Alas ! as I now write, and the memory of other days come o'er me, how unwisely I feel myself lingering on the past, instead of thanking God for the blessings and joys of the present. But the world which I knew not was then all before me—so bright and beautiful, so happy and apparently unselfish,

that I own I could not then believe that man could be man's most bitter enemy, more revengeful in his animosity than the tiger of Southern Africa; but a nearer contact in after life with human nature has taught me a lesson, soon learnt by most men after they quit that which they conceive to be the source of all life's miseries—the school-room. Then comes the knowledge, that filthy lucre, which means pure gold, is sought after more ravenously by man than the wolf seeks the midnight prey; and filthy lucre though it be, it snaps asunder the purest friendships, breaks the most noble hearts, and subdues the highest mental powers—and so will it while man is man, and the world remains.

Avaunt such thoughts as these, they recur to mind more forcibly when I think of the once happy Brooklands; but the huntsman's horn sounds cheerily, and dashing out of the spinny, followed by the whole pack, he trots on speedily to a covert at hand.

“I thought we were going to Allington Gos,” said Ploughshare, rolling by on his all but thorough-bred, touching his hat.

"And so we are Ploughshare," I cried out, "but the Duke has ordered Breinton Wood to be first tried."

"Well, well, Sir—two hunts are better than one, that's fact—but how do you like the new horse, Friar Tuck, as you calls him."

"I have not tried him yet, Ploughshare, but I will soon tell you—for there goes Mermaid, one of the best hounds of the pack into the covert—and if the varmint be there, we shall soon have to ride our best."

Ye sportsmen and sporting men, have you ever been on the field of battle and heard the first cannon roar, or the first shot whistle harmlessly over your head? have you ever numbered among a gallant corps that have charged home into the ranks of a foreign foe? have you ever listened for the sound of the approaching footsteps of one well-loved, from whom you have been long parted; or being low in cash have held in your hand an unopened letter from your banker, whom you have asked for an advance? Knowing that his refusal will place you in a painful position,

or his acquiescence in a most agreeable one. If I say you have ever experienced any of these heart-beatings, I tell you they are scarcely more exciting than that which you feel at the moment of hearing a well-known hound give tongue in a favourite covert, being mounted on a first-rate hunter with an open country before you. And doubtless, many were the heart-beatings as this hound's melodious voice echoed through the wood, followed by a wild halloo in the right direction, which announced that the foe had fled.

Boy as I was, I thought in those days that there was no man like the well-loved Lord of Brooklands, as that no horse in all England could beat Corbeau with his master on his back—and with the exception of the horse being really the best in England, God bless his memory—through life that opinion has never wavered. Where he rode, therefore, I felt I could not do better than ride also—I well knew that neither horse nor rider would refuse either fence or brook that was practicable. But I shall not dwell on

this run—sharp, short, and decisive as it was, inasmuch as I have to account for the death of as gallant a fox, afterwards found in Allington Gorse, as ever stood before hounds; affording a run equal to any it was ever my good fortune to witness, or even to read of in sporting history—a fox which yielded up his life to his pursuers, in the centre of another hunt—as day was closing into night. Enough, that I saw my Dad turn sharp to the right, and get well over a deep drop into a grass-field, followed by Selwyn on Parchment, and the young man I have mentioned with mustachios, who has since distinguished himself alike in the Senate as in his profession—while the body of the hunt went right a-head. And I said to myself, “If Dad is right, I shall be right, and we shall have the best of it—if Dad is wrong, so will be Selwyn, two good men and true—and I shall lay the blame on them for having led me astray.” But I was right—Squire Western was rarely out in his judgment; the Friar took the fence, which was an awkward one, admirably—and

immediately after me Ploughshare floundered into the field, dashing by, as were he riding for the Derby; and sending a clod of mud into my eye, that well nigh blinded me for the remainder of the day, crying out, "Come along, Master Fred, the Squire always knows a fox's point, and we have done the whole field." For once he was correct. The judicious line selected by my father and Selwyn, shewed their knowledge of hunting; and so, after jumping a light fence into a muddy lane, we soon found ourselves riding literally at full speed across an extensive common. The pace indeed was such, that neither hounds nor horses could have continued it for half an hour, and I soon found as I gained ground on Parchment and Corbeau, and had returned the compliment to Ploughshare, whom I bespattered—that my light weight was telling advantageously, and that our new horse, the Friar, was a fast one and a trump. Indeed, the hounds were running as fast as hounds could go, and we had shaken off by the lucky turn the entire field. A big wall at the end of a

ploughed field, which was unusually deep and sticky, from the recent frost, was right a-head. Over went the hounds followed by Selwyn, now leading—Corbeau took it at a higher point, and I endeavoured to follow him—but the ground was knee-deep, and being evidently not well accustomed to walls, the Friar would not have it. In the meantime, Ploughshare came on like a steam-engine, and as his horse faced it boldly, they might have got over—but he rolled in his saddle, and lifted his whip and shouted, as had he been placed in the field to frighten away the crows—and the gallant beast unequal to such a heavy pendulum on his back, swerved and struck the wall, which was a tolerable stiff one; and horse, horseman, as a portion of the wall, floundered into the next field. This let the Friar through, as it left Ploughshare amid some turnips—but the hounds had come to a momentary check, which enabled me to catch them again, as did it also bring up the huntsman and a few of the best men who

had raced the whole run. From this point to the finish, it was brilliant—with many a difficult fence to surmount—but the gallant fox was doomed to die and die he did, by the side of a small covert which he had in vain endeavoured to reach, with few to witness his demise—for the pace was such, that those who had made the first mistake, never could fairly catch the hounds, with the exception of the few named. The noble owner of the pack, however, appeared ere the fox was broken up, and expressed his entire satisfaction at the manner in which his beautiful pack had done their duty.

“Just thirty-eight minutes from find to kill, your Grace,” said the huntsman. “Here, Master Fred, is a pad. Had it not been Friday, the Friar would have jumped that wall, and you would have fairly gained the brush. Mr. Western has won too many in his day to wish for more; and Mr. Selwyn, who went well throughout the run, wishes a brush from his Grace’s country for Anderson’s Sporting Museum.”

"Why, Ploughshare," said another farmer, riding up, "your cords be a bit bespattered, I take it."

"I judge they are," he replied, good-humouredly, "and so would yours have been, had you rolled in that ere turnip field." But now for Allington Gorse.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOWARDS Allington we rode right joyously; horses that were in good condition suffered little from the first short run, though, in truth, it was a fast one. Those who had second horses in the field, then rarely the case, mounted them; those who had not rode steadily along, and nursed their noble beasts, as good sportsmen will do.

We traversed lanes, which in summer-time would have been cool and shady; in spring bedecked with the primrose and the violet; thence through the park of one, who, in his home as in the senate, has justly gained for himself the title of the people's

friend—one of those aristocrats so noble in their conduct—so generous in their actions—so just in their opinions and dealings, that were every Peer of the Realm such as he, truly would the aristocracy of England be England's surest safeguard, spite all said to the contrary. I never looked on his possessions, beautiful as they were, without thinking how blessed the man must be who owned them, and yet knew how to perform the duties of his stewardship. As the people who lived under him, and felt the effect of that stewardship in the knowledge that he who was their Lord was likewise their friend; and fully admitted by his conduct that the rights of property have some higher aim than Self.

But the anxious and excited cavalcade pass onwards through the Lodge Gates, held aside by an aged woman, who curtsies, and receives a good-day from his Grace the Duke. While I find jogging by my side one of two brothers well known in the hunt, who were considered admirable horsemen; and to do them justice men of such unconscious tact,

although not precisely in the position of gentlemen, though very much so in their conduct in the hunting field at least, that I never could deny to them a most just appreciation,—perfectly dressed, remarkably well mounted, without intrusion, bluster, or apparent desire for observation. When the hounds were running, they were ever in a forward place; and when not running, they held converse with one and another of the field in a quiet and unpretending manner, but with a true knowledge of horse and hound, as of the character of man.

Their name was Harewood, not an un-sporting one. Whether they belonged to the Lascelles family or not, I cannot say, and never enquired. Like the rest of us, however, I conclude they were descendants of Adam, and as they rather raised human nature by their conduct in my young estimation, I desired to know no more.

“Good morning, Master Fred,” said the elder, as he rode up to my side with unsplashed boots, and leathers as white as snow. “I hear you would have beaten the

whole field in the last run, but for the heavy ground near a large wall. A nice horse indeed you are riding, but when did the Brooklands stables hold a bad one?"

"You are correct as regards your latter remark," I replied, laughing; "but not exactly so as regards my performance in the run. I followed old Corbeau, whose rider rarely mistakes the proper fence to jump, while the field made a wrong turn, or, more properly speaking, the fox did, as far as they were concerned. Were you among the unlucky ones?"

"I was, and I was not. In fact I was delayed this morning, and consequently lost the whole chase. But we shall find in the Gorse I have no doubt; and so far I am lucky, for my horse is fresh."

"If so, I shall follow you, Mr. Harewood; for you know the country well, but do not lead me into a scrape, and I promise not to ride over you."

"Agreed, sir; yet, mark me, we are in for a clipper—but you must first taste Farmer Slowboy's ale, and a crust of bread

and cheese will do you good." This he said as he drew up at a large farmhouse, where almost the whole field had gathered. Plough-boys were leading horses, others were tied up, the stables and the house was filled, in fact—the one with hungry quadrupeds, the other with hungry bipeds. Accordingly, nothing loath, I dismounted, and following Mr. Harewood, entered a rather spacious room, in the centre of which was an immense round table, covered with cheeses and cold beef, hams, and loaves in abundance—beer was there also in gallons, wine, brandy, and rum—butter and bacon; in truth, the man who gave, gave bountifully and generously, and those that ate, ate heartily and unsparingly; in fact,

“ Whole barons of beef were cut down, sir—
Demolished into the back-bone, sir,”

At this truly English offering, appropriately termed a matutinal feast to St. Hubert.

At the moment we entered, the good-natured host was pressing a bottle of jump-

ing water, if pressing was required, on the attention of those assembled around King Arthur's table, for such one of the company had termed it—when, Harewood having whispered something into his ear, he turned round, and said, "Welcome, most welcome, young sir: be dad, here's your brother," as Arty came in, "you are most welcome also—the sons of as good a landlord and sportsman as the county can produce; though, may be you belong to the Earl's hunt rather than his Grace's—what then, fox-hunters are fox-hunters, whatever their hunt, so take a taste of something short, young gentlemen, for it strikes me we have a long day before us yet."

If recollection bear me out, the hair of many heads which then grew luxuriantly are now somewhat grey, while others are gone to that home from which no traveller returns. I did take something short, in the way of half a glass of cognac, termed jumping water, and had it not been for the hunch of home-made bread and lump of cheese as an accompaniment, which I soon disposed

of, together with the exercise, it might have caused my seat to be less firm in the second run than it had been in the first. Dire was the slaughter made on loaves and cheese, beef and bacon, brandy and beer, that well-remembered morning. "By the powers!" said an Irishman who was present, a right pleasant fellow, and first-rate rider, "by the powers! I always thought butchers and bakers useful members of society in general—but till this morning I never did them justice, in particular."

As we rode forward with the hounds after this hospitable refreshment—hunter and whips having justly had their share—Harewood, whose conversation I appreciated, from his extreme modesty and knowledge of the noble science, still riding by my side,—there passed us one whom I have already named, who had joined the hunt thus late in the day—a no less personage than Hoofcut, mounted on a splendid bony hunter, accompanied by his daughter, whom I have previously alluded to, mounted on an animal, which, differing totally in form and style,

was a perfect specimen of a horse. As he passed us, Hoofcut saluted me, saying, "Good-day, Master Fred, is the Squire, your worthy father, here? I told you, you would see me at Allington Gorse, though it's a smart distance from home. But Mary would come, and I could not say, nay."

"And you did right, dear father, for the day is so fine, and the field so large, and the hounds looking so well—besides, I am determined to shew Master Fred the way over Malstone Vale, for, if we find to-day, go there we shall ere nightfall, be assured."

With what admiration—no, that is not the term—with what positive feelings of respect and esteem, young as I was, I looked in those days on Mary Hoofcut, Veterinary's daughter though she was; indeed, I was not singular in my liking, for she was a general favourite with all the country round—and in truth she deserved to be so, for her admirable qualities of mind and heart: firm as a rock when she judged herself right—she was gentle and forgiving when she knew herself to be wrong, which

she rarely was. Though by no means improperly educated, she possessed abilities and sound sense far beyond her station—combined, however, with a delicacy of mind and gentleness of disposition which, while it led her to delight in the association of those of superior birth, if not attainments, also produced a kindness and simplicity of manners towards her inferiors, who soon ascertained they had nothing in common with her—but yet could never deny her kindness of disposition, her friendliness of action, as her admirable conduct. Such was the only child of our eccentric friend, Hoofcut; and if one higher quality may be added to the many she possessed, it was that she endeavoured with the most tender assiduity to fill that place in her father's home, made painfully void by the early loss of a doating mother—and what other but a loved and loving daughter could so well have filled it. And yet it will be my sorrow, as was it of many hundreds more, to speak of how in her very earliest youth, she was also taken from among us. And who then suffered more from that loss,

who felt it more acutely, whose life was embittered by it, more than that of my poor friend Selwyn. But I must for to-day, at least, cast away all thoughts of sorrow, for the sun shines brightly, and the world smiles upon all the gallant cavalcade, who hasten on towards the Gorse. Among them poor Mary, the admired of all beholders, pretty to use a simple English word she was not, nor fair in the world's estimation. But her figure, as she gracefully reined in her noble steed, was as far as could be perfect; and her dress also, save that she wore no veil to her well placed hat, which, if not altogether feminine in appearance, was dispensed with, to save its being rent to tatters when passing through fences. Her costume had no pretensions, the dark habit fitted close to a shape which required no extra skirt, or vulgar finery to improve it; her small hands had no gauntlets, but warm, well fitting buckskin gloves; her plain white collar is turned back over her habit, and around her swan-like throat a dark blue silk handkerchief is tied, alike the colour of the hunt, as to protect her

from the weather. Poor, poor Mary—in word and action the most gentle of her sex—as she sat her noble horse so firmly, gracefully, and her dark eyes flashing under the shadow of her jet-black hair, braided round her high forehead, her mouth ever smiling from cheerfulness of heart, I really thought her then, and memory confirms those thoughts, that she was the most graceful and yet the most unpretending horsewoman I ever beheld. And although I confess that I love not generally to see women in the chase, her riding was so admirable, and so void of ostentation or intrusion to those who had often much difficulty to catch her, that she was ever welcome in the hunting field. But I see her now with the eye of pleasant recollection, put her horse Bavieca, for so she was pleased to call him, into a canter, and lifting her light whip, as she passed me with inoffensive yet playful manner, say, Come along, Master Fred, the hounds have reached the Gorse, we must be there to hear the first note from the gallant pack, which

will lead us to victory. And then patting the neck of the beautiful animal she rode, the horse acknowledged her touch, and seemed to bound over the earth.

CHAPTER XVII.

UNDER the shelter of a small covert, looking westward were assembled as gallant and well mounted a body of horsemen as any county of old England, Melton perhaps excepted, could produce.

At least six score horses might be counted, one-half of that number being of a superior class.

At the moment of our joining the eager throng, all anxious and ready for the fray, many a merry joke was passing, or some badinage here and there went round, for the joyous laugh was heard; but all were excited with expectation in the hope of a sure find. The huntsman rode forward, and,

touching his cap, asked the noble owner of the pack if he should draw first a small covert at hand, and then try a somewhat extensive gorse which lay below us; or I should, speaking truly, say to the left or southward of where we were assembled.

"Try the Gorse, try the Gorse," said his Grace, "by all means, it generally holds, and the day is getting on."

In an instant every hound was in covert.

I now caught the eye of Ploughshare, in the act of tightening the girths of his lanky Chesnut, who exclaimed, "Well, Master Fred, we are at Allington Gos at last." While Arty, who rode up at the moment, and shook hands with Mary, or May, as he called her, said, "Recollect, Fred, if we find, the battle will be severe, should I be taken prisoner in a mud pond, or perchance be left among the slain, I leave my kit to thee, brother mine, and a lock of my hair to you, May. But here comes Selwyn, on Parchment, looking like Romeo, so I must leave him with his Juliet." No time was allowed, however, for billing, cooing, or talking. A

well-known hound spoke, another and another, then the whole pack joined in one melodious chorus left the Gorse in a body, turned sharply to the right, and in another minute two score of hard riders had cleared a stiff rail and ditch, and were racing over a large grass field. The pace was such for a mile as to admit of my seeing only the elder Harewood two horses' length before me. I had determined on this occasion to follow him, and I was right, had he succumbed and I had still powder left I should have fought alone. But such was the pace we had started with, it was quite beyond the lasting powers of man, horse, or hound; still the race continued, till we reached a well known covert in the hunt called Stanwell Park, here the Varmint hung for a moment, and Mary rode up, as had she merely taken a canter in the Park, and said, "this is only the commencement of the run, few will live to the end of it." Alas that this—a mere cheerful allusion to the chase—should have proved true, at least as regards herself, the only female present.

But we are away again. A high stone wall with a drop into a road stops for a moment some few who hitherto had been going well, but my boyish weight was light, my horse good, and Harewood an admirable horseman in the van. Ploughshare succumbed at this wall, but as usual he fell cleverly, while Mary took it splendidly, and gathering the noble Bavieca together, was over the next fence and away ere we had time to select a place. On the right were the Duke, Squire Western, Selwyn, Arty, and many first-rate men; while the huntsman and another gentleman, whose name I now forget, led the left squadron. But Harewood and his brother were as good riders as any in the field, while few could beat poor Mary, or Hoofcut himself, when he chose to ride, and where they rode so rode I.

Twenty minutes had now elapsed since the fox broke covert, while the pace had little diminished, and forward was the cry, over hill and dale, gate and fence, the field diminished and diminishing. Offspray covert three-

quarters of a mile a head, a large covert generally full of foxes, and no earths stopped, who knows, we may change or have to dig. But no, luckily no, he disdains either earth or woodland shelter, hangs but for a moment to make a slight half circuit of the covert, and is once more away again, faster and faster than ever; we dash through the rides, heavy from recent rains, bespattering one another with mud, pass from the woodlands and descend a heavy ploughed field, at the bottom of which an ugly fence presented itself. "Never saw I a worse," said the huntsman, as he approached it at a gallop, with little time to consider. "Shall I describe it?" yes, I will, in order that those who may perchance to meet with a similar one may be enabled to get over it; to me, I must confess, that it appeared at first impracticable, and I held the Friar in the hope that some more experienced and heavier sportsman would clear the way for me. To those who may fancy that nothing is easier than to ride to a pack of hounds, racing over an enclosed country, if so be the horse on which

they are mounted can gallop, I can imagine their astonishment and dismay at coming face to face with a very high bank, approached by heavy slippery ground inclining towards its base, on the top of which is a flourishing thick alder hedge, and beyond, on the far side, a deep wide ditch, into which, if not fixed in the alders, you must either drop with the probability of remaining there the rest of the day, or being drowned for choice, without you jump it clear, a feat which even the very best of hunters, handled by a first-rate rider, might be pardoned, did he fail to perform in; while at the end of the field behold a very high gate, quite new, locked, with hinges secured from intrusion; the landing into a narrow lane covered with new laid stones, and this the only exit towards the hounds.

To use a sporting term, this ugly rasping fence at first appeared a pounder, but the hounds were running two fields a head, and many good men were there who would have faced the Thames at such a moment. The first who charged it was Selwyn, well and firmly

seated on Parchment; at a hand gallop he approached the difficulty—the noble horse did not hesitate—the spot selected was certainly the weakest—crash went the alders, and, wonderful to relate, for those who were an eye-witness to the feat, horse and rider landed safely in the field beyond, and followed fast on the hounds. The breach having thus been stormed, others were ready and eager to follow; and the next who rode at it was one of the Duke's Leicestershire friends, almost at a racing pace, he charged the obstacle, and the gallant beast he rode apparently without effort or touching a twig also cleared it safely, then came the huntsman, his well trained horse jumped among the branches, and landed successfully. I then approached the fence, but the Friar pulled hard and eagerly; while, as is the case with most young riders, I possibly hung too heavily on his bridle, and the consequence was well nigh fatal; a stiff root caught his hind leg, he pitched on his head, and precipitated me, not into but literally over the wet ditch, into the opposite field, and there

for a moment I lay alone in my glory. The Friar, however, luckily recovered himself, and having jumped the ditch was caught by one of the whips, who kindly helped me to mount; and away, away again we rode, faster and faster o'er the plain. All this, however, occurred in less time than I have taken to relate it.

While the horsemen on the left were thus proceeding, and I still followed the elder Harewood, who held his own manfully, those on the right, among whom numbered Squire Western, with many other good men and true, as also poor Mary, had their difficulties to contend with, to avoid the awkward fence we had surmounted. They had diverged rather too much from the line of the pack, thus having to encounter Marmouth Brook at the very widest point; while the leading men of both parties were riding almost in a line, we had therefore also to face the water, but at a much easier place, and the difficulty was passed without mishap of any kind. Not so with those headed by the Lord of Brooklands, down a sharp declivity of grass

they rattled ; time there was none for selecting a good spot to take off from, or a good bottom to jump into. Corbeau, however, true as steel, took it in his stride. The next man who approached it, and a good man was he, charged it as he would a squadron of cuirassiers ; when his horse, probably slipping from the heavy state of the banks, horse and rider almost disappeared beneath the muddy stream. While others met a similar fate ; two or three only getting clear over, the unfortunate ones appearing well drenched at the end of the run. Showing they were not born to be drowned, or disposed to succumb to water.

Among the number who approached this disastrous brook, was Hoofcut's daughter ; had she been leading at the time, I doubt not but that she would have faced it boldly ; and being mounted on a first-rate hunter, would possibly have shewn the way to the rest of the field. As it was, she witnessed the various disasters I have named ; but was saved from encountering the same mishap herself by a labourer at hand, who shouted

loudly from the further end of the field, and pointed out a place where a low wall being jumped, the bottom was sound and gravelly; and thus she soon caught the hounds again, accompanied by a lucky few, who in this instance were fortunate enough to follow her.

Away and away, over hill and dale, flees the gallant fox. Behold the ancient tower of Lansford Abbey in the distance. At least twelve miles have been ridden over; die he must; no hound or horse can live the pace. Already two-thirds of a large field are shaken off, while many who still hold on, will soon cry hold enough. His Grace of Gloucestershire, mounted on a second horse, as also his Leicestershire friends, were well up; while Corbeau, and Selwyn on Parchment, with the huntsman, were in front, as also the young man with moustaches, who had ridden well in the first run; while two or three of the hunt, in blue, were steadily at work. Poor Mary was also there, and the Harewoods, and Fred Western, and may be some others; but whereas two hundred horsemen and more

had assembled that fresh and joyous morning at Allington Gorse not an hour since, scarce five-and-twenty could now be counted.

"Forwards, forwards," cried the huntsman.

"We kill him for a thousand in Crenden Wood," adds Selwyn.

"Hold on, brave Corbeau," said Mr. Western, "this pace can never last."

"He 'll not touch the Wood," exclaimed the younger Harewood, "but away for the large coverts of Bagstock, in the White Horse country ; and if so, look out for the canal. Is it fordable?"

"There's a swing bridge or two on the line," observed one of the hunt, "but no fox that ever saw light will stand thus far before the Duke's hounds."

"Forwards, forwards," again shouted their leader, "he gains the Lansford Woods." And luckily for the few then up, who were nursing their horses, he did so. Nevertheless, he disdained their refuge, and after hanging for a minute or two, and causing a slight check, thus allowing us a momentary

breather, he was off again and away. Harewood had predicted truly, however; for he thence turned to the right, and after crossing the canal, which was doubtless refreshing, he made direct for the Bagstock coverts; luckily there was a bridge at hand, over which we rattled; from thence, however, crossing some large water meadows, sufficiently deep to try the remaining powers of our horses. And light as I was, I felt that the Friar, who had only recently been located in the Brookland stables, had well nigh had enough. Where were now many of the field who had started so fresh that morning? I knew not. What had become of Ploughshare? Who could say? He might be sticking in a muddy ditch, or drowned in the canal. All I saw clearly was the figure of the gallant Mary, who rode steadily forward on my right, while Corbeau appeared to be still going as if made of iron and whalebone.

“Take me to the end of this day,” exclaimed Selwyn, cheering his horse Parchment, as he crashed through a bull-finch, making an

opening for the rest of us, "take me to the end of this run, and you shall have rest for the remainder of your life."

"He must be a rare horse to do it," replied one of the hunt, who was then dismounting, "I gave three hundred for Peter, but he is dead beat, and I will not break his heart, though it almost breaks mine to give in." And he looked completely what he said.

But at this moment an obstacle appeared before us that would have tried the nerve of a good man, mounted on a first-rate horse, at the early part of the run. What then was it, to men and horses after such a chase? Yet when do Englishmen flinch, even if danger there be, with a gallant fox in the van, close followed by an eager pack.

"It is a stopper, and no mistake," I said to myself rather too loudly, feeling that the Friar was not going so firmly. "Not a bit of it," added young Harewood, who now came up, and gathering his horse firmly together, boldly faced it full gallop, and got clear over a stiff double post and rails,

a high bank, with a new laid hedge, and a ditch beyond. Suffice, we all followed him — almost simultaneously — but with different results. The well-conditioned horse of Harewood the elder jumped on the bank and off again. Selwyn charged the whole, when Parchment smashed the rails without falling. Had I availed myself of this opening, as did others, all would have been well. But, alas! my spirit was backed by my pride, and with more nerve than wisdom I selected a place of my own, and charged it as young Harewood had done. But whether the Friar had lost wind, or that I rode nervously, I know not, for although he rose fairly, and cleared the first rail, he slipped on the bank, rolled over, and deposited himself, as his rider, in the ditch on the other side. For one moment, as I lay on my back, looking at the blue heaven above me, I felt my hunting days were over, and the Friar defunct.

But I was happily mistaken, and soon found that although I was a damp moist body, that body was quite sound. More-

over, the Friar had still a gallop remaining, for having made a few successful struggles, he regained his legs as did I—we were up and off again,—never, however, to recover my place in the run—all I could do was steadily to follow in the chase ; in so doing, I passed more than one discomfited hero leading a horse no longer able to carry him. I gained the last field, however, ere the fox was quite broken up, and if I did not actually hear the whoo-hoop, I carried home, at least, a trophy which I shall treasure up through life. Nothing, however, could get the poor Friar over the last fence—he was, in fact, as many a better horse, quite done. Though I question, whether had he been a month or two, instead of half that time in the Brooklands stables, he would not have been fairly in at the death. All I remember, is this fact—that having ridden him three or four times unsuccessfully at a fence, which in the early part of the run he would have galloped over, I dismounted, and clambering over the hedge, cried out to my father—who numbered among the half dozen actually up

at the finish. "I'm here, Dad, I'm here, Mr. Selwyn—the Friar gave me a bad fall." "The deuce he did," said Selwyn; "you were not hurt, boy—were you? never lad rode better in the best of runs I ever witnessed."

Thus ended the most exciting and fastest run with hounds, it was ever my good fortune to ride to—no greater proof than this fact, when the fox was found, the field numbered at least two hundred; when the fox was killed, there was not half a dozen present—at the death, not a score in sight. Like an extended battle-field; fearful was the amount of wounded and missing; and my heart bleeds in recollection of the dead.

"Where are we?" I exclaimed, when my pulse once more beat steadily as I stood beside the Friar, whose tail was nervously shaking. "That you may well ask, Sir," replied the huntsman—who looked at his weary hounds, and then at his still more weary horse. "But I fancy we are somewhere in the White Horse country; and at

least twenty-five miles from the kennel. As for you, Mr. Western, you'll have a long and dark ride to Brooklands, I take it, without you put up with his Grace to-night; he will be glad to talk over such a run as this has been—as will our stable lads do their duty by Corbeau."

"Well, I know that"—said my beloved Dad; who had thoroughly enjoyed the sport, and ridden as well, if not better than any one of the field. "Well, I know that—but, unluckily, I have some friends at home; yet who could foresee what we have actually witnessed? a run—full eighteen miles from find to finish. No, we must move homewards as best we can—and I fancy our point will be Marston. What say you, leave our horses there and post homewards—we can get a chaise, I presume?"

"Yes, Squire! I fancy you might; my road is two miles on your line." And with this, the cavalcade—but a few hours since all excitement, strength, and spirits—moved slowly homewards. The huntsman leading, with the Lord of Brooklands by his side;

and several of us, among whom was Selwyn, quietly following.

I have frequently, in after years, when thinking of this delightful fox-chase, asked myself the cause of the extreme depression, which, young as I was, I felt when it was over; a depression, which I confess frequently to have felt in after years, after the termination of a good run.

This feeling seemed really to have overtaken every one present—more particularly Selwyn—who, at last turning towards me, said, “What became of Mary, Fred?”

“I saw her within two miles of the finish going well,” I replied—“and her horse was tolerably fresh; how well she rides—possibly she did not think we were so near the kill.”

“Possibly,” he replied, “and turned homewards; I trust we may see her at Marston, and I will send her horse over to-morrow with mine, and get her to go home in a chaise.”

The night came on dark and drizzly ere we reached Marston. Further, we could

not have gone — for all the horses were beaten. Here we obtained a chaise. Selwyn joined us, and we rattled homewards, at ten miles an hour ; but the dinner was not then served quite so late as it now is in these days ; and we considered half-past six sufficiently aristocratic at the Old Hall at home.

When we arrived, not a little anxiety was depicted on the countenance of my sweet mother, as on that of dear Gussy, who, as the chaise drew up to the door, had rushed into the Hall to meet us, in full dinner dress, all the expected guests having arrived at least an hour previously. “Thank God, you are come at last,” said my mother, “I feared some accident had occurred ;” with eyes overflowing and looking at her boys.

“Accident,” exclaimed my younger brother, “none, I am happy to say ; save the accident of a splendid run.” — “And you, dear Fred,” added Gussy, “are you hurt ? for I see you are covered with mud from head to foot.”

“Hurt ! no, Popsy darling. I fall light,

and the mud was all softness, as are your sex, but not so agreeable."

"Order the dinner to be served at once," said Mr. Western, "the Duke's haunch, I fear, will be spoilt. Make my apologies; a sportsman's apologies will be understood. Come along, Selwyn, I can lend you something in the way of adornment."

All I can recollect at this distant time of that pleasant dinner party, was the fact of Selwyn having appeared in the red coat in which he had hunted, and a pair of black tights, somewhat loose about the calves of his legs, at which we all laughed. That I sat next to a young lady at dinner, who, for ought I know to the contrary, may since have become the happy mother of seven small children, who was fearfully marked with the small-pox, but who was nevertheless admitted to be one of the most agreeable women in the county, as to have the prettiest foot.

That the first crimped Severn salmon of the season was unanimously pronounced excellent; as was the haunch, notwithstanding

ing our delay ; and that I fell fast asleep, and snored loudly, from absolute fatigue, the moment the cheese was placed on the table ; and was awakened at dessert by the young lady in question having put a piece of ice to my lips ; passed a very pleasant evening, and went to bed late.

But, alas, how restless was my sleep ; as is ever the sleep of fevered fatigue. Now I slept soundly—then struggled from the nightmare, and fancied that I had fallen at a fence, and that my leg was broken. Again I saw Mary struggling under her horse, and waking up in a fearful perspiration, my thoughts reverted to the lady who had been my companion at the dinner table. Such were the wild fancies which a fevered imagination created. And then I went to sleep again, and slept soundly, till the shutters being thrown aside by the footman who entered my room to call me, I beheld the sun of a winter's morning struggling vainly through the mist. That sun was the last, unalloyed by the cares and sorrows of the world, which ever rose on the path of my life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUNSHINE OF LIFE.

I WAS still stiff and tired from the fatigue and excitement consequent on the pleasures of the previous day ; and had determined to enjoy a little extra repose, having already sent a coaxing message to the pet Gussy, informing her that I was not quite well, and that a nice breakfast tray, with a covered basin of creamy tea, a little hot buttered toast, a muffin, an egg, the broiled leg of a fowl, or the cold leg of a pheasant, would be acceptable ; in fact, suggesting that a few such enticing trifles would be acceptable to

an invalid ; when a sharp rap sounded on my chamber door, evidently the rap of no female knuckles. "Come in," I shouted, half rising from my bed, "who knocks so loudly at the castle gate."—"I," replied a voice, which at the moment I scarcely recognized, "And who may I be?" "Why I'm stagnated, but you're still in bed at this hour ; it's after ten, Master Fred." And thus introducing himself, Forster proceeded to inform me, as he stood like a giant near my bed, looking unusually sad, that the fog was so thick you might ladle it up with a soup ladle ; that the poachers would have a few pheasants ; and that his honour, the Squire, had breakfasted, and gone to his study with a tear in his eye ; that his darling Miss Gussy, was a weeping herself to a thread-paper in the parlour ; and, in fact, that all the household, as all the neighbourhood, were by that time lamenting the loss of the best ——. "What or whom," I almost screamed, "is the King dead."—"No."—"Is my Mother ill ? The Earl, the Duke, or the huntsman ?"—"Be calm, Master

Fred," said the good old man, "be calm, I'm stagnated." The poor man really appeared to be so; for his eyes were now overflowing. I saw in a moment that something was wrong, and that of no common order; and I said at once, "Pray keep me no longer in suspense."—"Well, sir, I'm stagnated, but what God wills is sure to come to pass. Poor Mary Hoofcut is dead and gone."

"Mary Hoofcut dead and gone," I exclaimed, and truly I felt at the moment as if I were about to die myself. But yesterday in all the pride of life and health, and overflowing spirits, she rode among us the gayest of the gay. Much liked, even loved, for her excellent qualities and simple virtues; full of happy anticipation for the future, and right joyous in the present. Little more thought I of idling away the morning in bed. No, indeed. I was all anxiety to hear full particulars of the sudden and mournful death of one, whom I had known from my earliest childhood, whose lips never uttered to me at least ought but words of kindness, and whose actions were ever directed by

courtesy and good feeling. As I hastened to dress myself, I asked innumerable questions of the good old man, who still lingered in my room, with a head bowed low, and eyes overflowing with tears of heartfelt sorrow. It was, I may name, his constant habit to come to our rooms in the morning, either to relate some jocular tale of the neighbourhood—information in reference to the hounds—of woodcocks he had flushed—poachers frightened, or foxes unkennelled in the Brookland coverts—but this morning his merriment was gone ; his avocation silent. Indeed, had his pride and pet, my young sister Gussy, been dead, instead of her for whom he grieved, he could scarce have evinced much more sadness.

“ Well,” said I, “ this is painful indeed. But tell me some particulars ; how did it happen ? What was the cause ? An accident, doubtless. But was it in the hunting field ; or where ? When last I saw her, she was riding cheerfully, and well.”

“ May be so, Master Fred—may be so. I’m stagnated ; but I know nothing ’ticular,

save, poor lass, that she is dead, and gone from among us. And 'tis said that Mr. Selwyn is well nigh beside himself. He were main attached to her. His worshipful honour, your honourable papa, will tell you all; he is fretting sadly below stairs, and Miss Guzzy, and all."

Followed by poor Forster, I hastily descended and entered the breakfast room, and there, sure enough, I found the whole party in affliction.

The Lord of Brooklands, as many kindly termed him, as was his custom, was standing with his back to the fire, looking sad and sorrowful. Gussy's eyes were red from weeping, and all the party as dolorous within as was the weather without. "How has this lamentable event occurred," I said, taking my father's hand; "poor Mary."

"Lamentable, indeed, my dear Fred, to be taken thus early before her God in the pride of life. Well, well, may she be received into a better world; she knew but little of the sins and sorrows of this."

“ But what was the cause of her sudden death ?”

“ I will tell you. Her faithful Bavioca, for the first time, made a false step, and killed her. That is, she was taking a large fence at the termination of yesterday’s run, when the noble animal put his foot into a grip, and, when struggling violently to recover himself, the pummel of her saddle gave way, she fell heavily forward, and, dreadful to relate, literally broke her neck.”

“ Poor Selwyn,” I exclaimed, “ what will become of him. How fondly attached he was to that poor girl.”

“ Indeed he was, poor fellow, and she deserved his truthful attachment, and would have made him an admirable wife ; true, her station was not precisely his—what then, her education, as her conduct, was beyond all praise, and she would have made him a happy man. But she is gone, and God alone can give him strength to support her loss. But in thinking of her, as of those who loved her, we forget him whose affection for her

was the greatest of all, and whose affliction will be the most severe, her poor father. An only and motherless daughter—who will fill her place in his heart and home? None, no, not one. I must write to the poor old man, and at least tell him there are many hearts who bleed in unison with his own.” Consolation from the true-hearted is balm in the hour of sorrow, and such was Mr. Western.

I can recollect nothing in my early life that I felt so bitterly, as did I this sad event. Alas, as sudden as it was sad, I felt it, as did we all, in the old Hall at home, not the less for her taken from among us, than for him who remained.

On her parent’s heart the blow fell heavily, and well nigh crushed him, for he was already advancing in life, and two short years afterwards he lay beside her in the churchyard.

On her lover, the effect was annihilating. “Had I heard her last words,” he exclaimed, to my father, almost the only one to whom he ever named her; “had I heard her last

kind word, I could have borne it all more like a man. You know we were betrothed. You know, the only cause which delayed my happiness, was the noble idea, on her part, that her station scarcely fitted her to be my wife; but that I had at last overcome, by untiring proofs of my real affection; and when the leaf came on the tree again, she would have been mine for ever. Alas, had she died with her hand in mine, my name on her lips, I should have been more calm. God willed it otherwise. But hark you, Western, trifling though the apparent cause of my additional grief, that trifle sinks deeply into the heart that fondly loves. You knew well her firm character, her warm affection, at times her apparently trifling hasty disposition, with strong animal courage, ever ready to laugh at danger in the hunting-field, as would she, I believe, have borne herself in the battle-field.

“Well, I warned her not seldom to be more careful, but particularly so on the day of her sad death; and we had what the world terms a lover’s quarrel—and most

truly was it merely a lover's quarrel—but the hounds were running, and we forgot to make it up—and although weak I may be to think more of it now I have lost her precious self, it nevertheless goes to my heart's core now she is gone."

"What was it all about?" asked my father—"a mere trifle, I'll be bound; she loved you well, Selwyn, she loved you well, so respect her memory, and be a man."

"That am I," he replied, "and one to whom she was so dear, that my future life will be but a living death. We were both riding at a large fence, when I exclaimed, Mary, darling, I implore you to be more careful—you ride far too fearlessly."

"Nonsense, nonsense," she replied, "go along, and never mind me."

"But I do mind you," I added, "and you shall not ride like a mad woman."

"I will," she added; "and recollect I am not your wife yet, and do not know that I ever shall be."

"Nonsense, Mary darling, nonsense, as you say to me, you shall not ride as you

do—and with this she dashed over a high fence, and we never met again in life. It is true that she did so with a smile on her lips, and an arch look of kindness in her eyes—and this will ever be my consolation, if consolation can ever reach my broken heart.”

“And well may it be, Selwyn, if you ever doubted the love of that true-hearted girl.”

But enough of this sad story. It was midnight of the day we had met so joyfully at Allington Gorse, that Selwyn was aroused from a deep sleep, overcome by the fatigue and excitement he had gone through. As I have said, he had returned with us to Brooklands, instead of going home to the Lodge. But I had neither heard the messenger, who came to the back of the house, nor had I been aroused by his departure, as I slept in a wing of the Hall remote from his apartment. I was, however, subsequently informed, that when told that a sad accident had happened to Miss Hoofcut, he appeared as one paralysed—but recovering himself, he called for a glass of wine, and, without

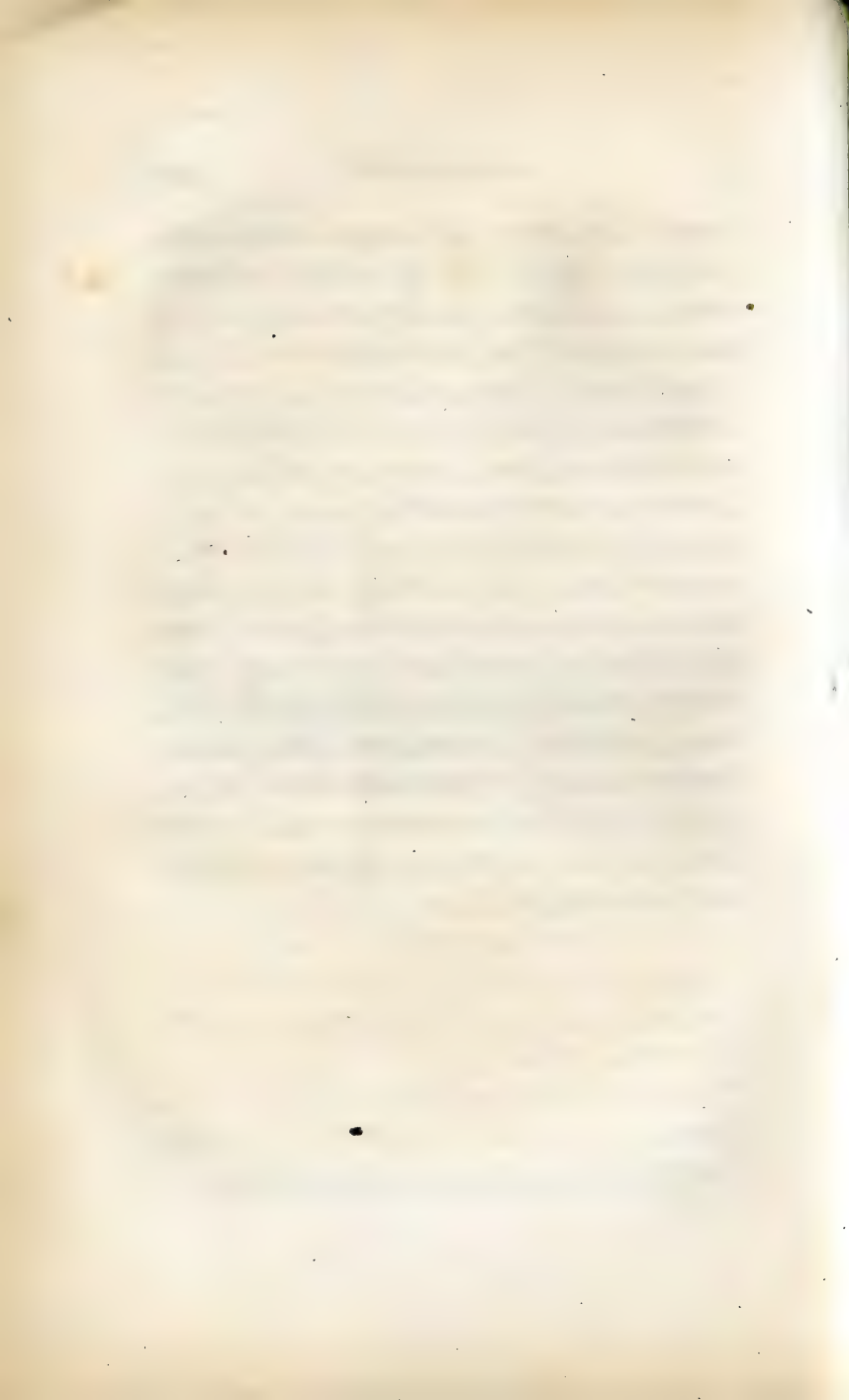
uttering another word, mounted a hack, and rode, dark as was the night, to Hoof-cut's residence, twelve miles' distant, within the hour. On his arrival there, being imprudently admitted without caution, he rushed to her usual apartment, and there beheld, stretched on a bed, the corpse of her whom he had loved with the whole heart's love of a man who had passed the fiery ordeal of youthful passion, and felt with all the depth and intensity of a man in his meridian. At the side of her bed, knelt her unhappy, heart-broken parent—while the medical man, who had known and esteemed them for long years, stood in silence and in sorrow, for well he knew that no skill of his could revive her, as that the consolation of man at such a moment would be rather an insult than an act of friendship. But his professional services were soon required again—poor Selwyn, who had hastened into the room, under all circumstances unadvisedly, yet with the feeling that her he so fondly loved had possibly broken a leg, arm, or rib, but would be spared to him—in the meantime desirous to

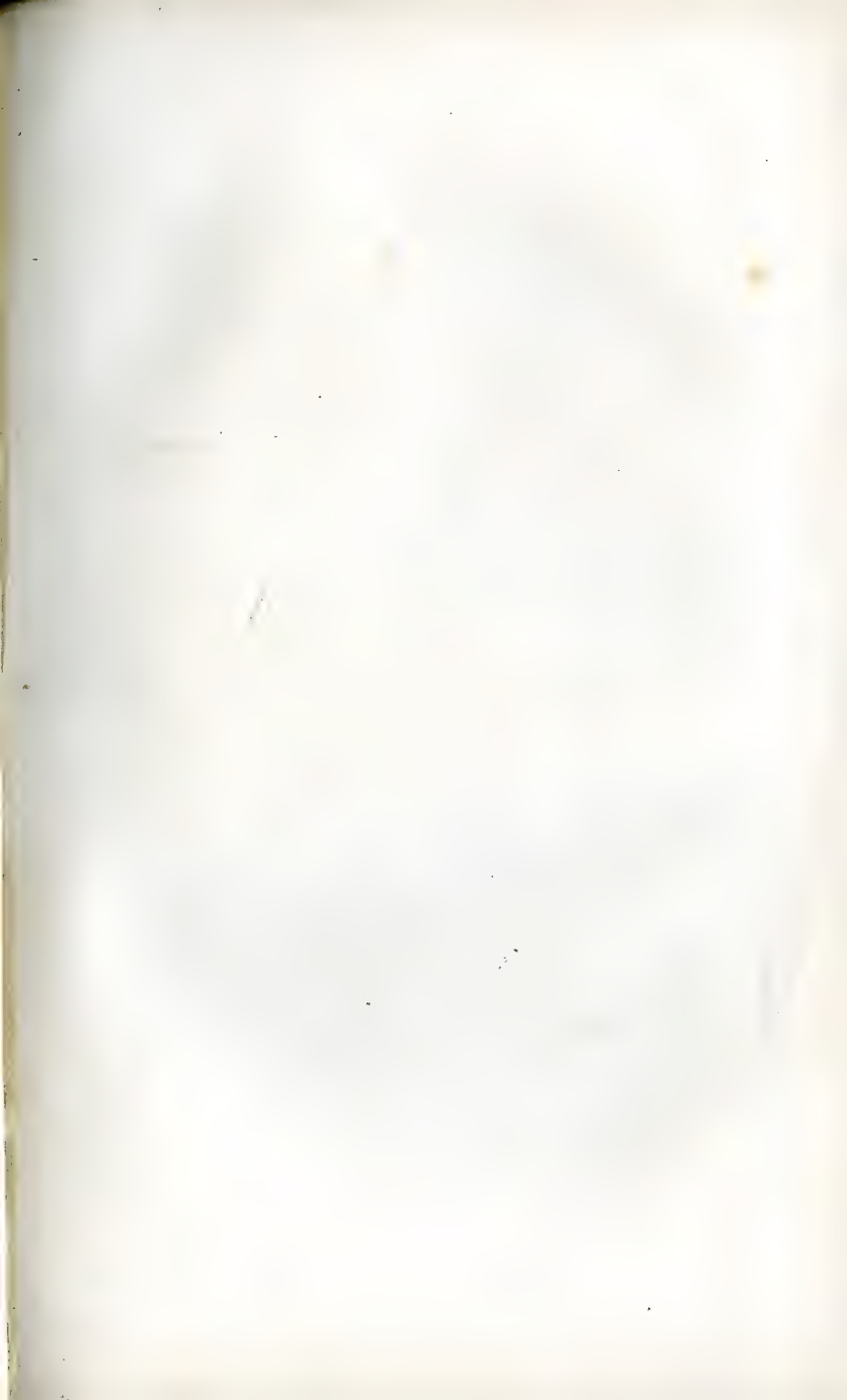
act as nurse, menial, or ought else, to tend her while suffering, stood for one moment aghast, as he first looked on the clay-cold corpse, then at the kneeling father, and again at the pallid face in death of her he had so idolized in life—and then, overpowered by the full gush of agonised feelings, fell senseless on the floor.

So terrible were the effects of his grief, that a succession of fainting fits followed; indeed, it was sometime before he was sufficiently recovered to be put to bed, in the same house with the corpse of her to whom till then few imagined him to be so warmly attached. For a month he lay there—now raving, now apparently insensible to all around him. Grief, however terrible, nevertheless rarely kills, notwithstanding the deep inroads it makes on a hitherto strong constitution. And in poor Selwyn's case, although physical powers and a good constitution gained the day, when he arose from his bed of sickness, debilitated and care-worn, to return to his once cheerful home at the Lodge, he went there an altered

man. The happy and open-hearted smile no longer lighted up his amiable countenance, no longer, as in former days, did he associate with the neighbourhood—seldom, indeed, was he seen without the house; and notwithstanding the repeated attempts made by my dear father, during our absence, my mother, as also his favourite, Gussy, to cheer him, and induce him to visit the Hall, they were in vain. His favourite hunters were sold; Anderson, though still a lingerer about the house, pensioned off; one horse alone being retained, but that one had been ridden by poor Mary. In fact, the Lodge was no longer a home of happiness and hospitality, and Selwyn, in whose society we had so well loved to find ourselves, became a broken-hearted, invalid recluse.

END OF VOL. I.







THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

THE GREAT KING CHARLES THE FIRST
BY
JOHN BURNET
OF LINCOLN'S INN
IN TWO VOLUMES.
LONDON, Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1679.

THE SECOND VOLUME.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
LONDON, Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1679.



BROOKLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

SCARCELY had ten days elapsed subsequent to the painful event I have named, when the time arrived for our return to Eton. I will not dwell at any length on the privacy of home scenes which took place on that occasion; in these days all appears changed—boys then wept, and wept sadly, when bidding adieu to fond parents and happy home circles; 'tis possible some do now—why not? there is nothing, I wot of, unmanly or unboyish, if you will it, in kind and affectionate feelings towards fond and indulgent parents. As regards myself, Fred Western, though I could as a boy, and in after years

as a man, ride over a fence, from which I have seen those far better mounted turn; though I have fought many a bigger lad than myself, aye, and gained the battle; known the hour of real bitter sorrow and misfortune, and borne their sad effects resolutely; witnessed a bloody field of strife without being improperly unnerved; and suffered physical pangs, somewhat hard to bear. Yet was I as soft-hearted when Black Monday, as we termed the day, arrived as the veriest girl—a fault which, to my cost, I have found an iron bar in the way to life's happiness, so hard to oppose, that I verily believe a sensitive disposition, added to what is termed a warm heart, to be nothing more than virtues in reality, which communion with the world turns into absolute vices. With such faults then, which I have perhaps mistermmed virtues, I own that the day previous to leaving home was thus passed. I visited first the stable, and caressed all the horses by turns, and particularly recommended them to the tender care of Bradly, at the same time cautioning the

boy George afore-named, to give the Friar an extra feed of corn daily, the month previous to my return home, for by what right, I know not, since the day at Allington Gorse, I had appropriated him to myself. The cows in the home farm, the pigs, the fowls, even the bull, next had their share of my affections. Thence I passed an hour with the old Stagnater at the keeper's lodge, cried over the pointers and setters, and embraced alike spaniels and terriers; and then, unknown to the dear Gouvernante, having purloined as it were her Popsy darling, from the school-room, once more, as on the day following our arrival, accompanied by Arty, the melancholy trio set forth to visit Farmer Barleycorn; but on this occasion to bid him and Miss Arnold adieu. Ploughshare, and other sporting tenants of the same stamp, were also favoured by a visit, from one and all of whom we parted, as were we about to take a sea voyage to Calcutta, instead of to pass a few brief months in daily association with the flower of England's juvenile aristocracy. Then came the morning of actual

departure. A mother's eyes were filled with a mother's tears; Gussy's overflowed like a thunder-storm—even the dear old Lord of Brooklands was guilty, I fancy at times, of a trifling weakness, for all that he endeavoured to make things cheerful, with encouraging words like these—"Come, boys, the sooner away, the sooner home again. I shall have the trout well preserved for the summer holidays. Gussy will write you an account of our day at Brooklands, should the Earl meet here. But the hunting season will soon be over. Most likely we shall be all up at the Montem. By the bye, Fred, you must have a red coat. It will do for the next season," and so forth.

Warmly, and with sincere affection, did kind words and fond embraces pass among us, even the favourite old deer-hound came in for his share of affection. We were off, and the lodge gates which six weeks previously had opened to admit us with merry hearts, now closed on our departure in sorrow—sorrow do I call it; no, no, it was only a passing cloud over the sunshine of

boyhood. Could life be ever thus, who would think of death. Death, which if we be fit to die, will introduce us to that home, where even the passing cloud will never dim the sunshine of our eternal happiness.

Arrived at Eton. The meeting with young friends—the endless tales of the hunting field, fox hounds and fox hunters, ponies and Christmas parties—new associations, new friends—soon set our sad hearts at rest; and time flew fast, as it ever flies—whether in joy or sorrow. About a month after we had left home, I received according to promise the following letter from Gussy:

“DARLING FRED,—According to promise I write to tell you that the Earl’s hounds met at Brooklands on Wednesday. As usual the dear Dad gave a breakfast to all comers. The morning was delightful, and the scene was beautiful; had you and dear Arty been here I should have enjoyed it beyond everything.

“Papa went over the day previous to poor Mr. Selwyn, and begged him to come;

but he firmly declined, saying he should never hunt again—that he was about to let the Lodge, and go abroad. This is very sad ; we have ever been so much accustomed to see him at the Hall, and he was ever so kind to us. He added that he should not leave England without seeing the boys—meaning, of course, you and dear Arty. However, you are dying to hear of the hunt. The field, to use a sporting term, was immense ; and tremendous havoc they made among the rounds of beef, hams, and fowls prepared for breakfast, and Hind declared to Dad—I know not how truly—that they drank a gallon of jumping water. What is it, Fred ? They certainly, or their horses, at least, jumped very well.

“The morning was very fine, and Brilliant looked beautiful, while Corbeau seemed quite proud that the hounds should meet on his own property. The Earl was all politeness, and declared, as he always does, that I looked charming, and, of course, I did. Old Forster was quite stagnated, as well he might have been, for the hounds on being

thrown into the White Gate Plantation, within gun-shot of the house, as he said, and which you well know is our best pheasant preserve, found instantly ; and after a most brilliant five-and-thirty minutes killed in the open. Mamma and dearest Gouvernante were looking out at the east turret window, and say they saw the best of it. Dear Dad, you know, will not let me follow the hounds. But Bradly turned out to perfection—boots and breeches the envy of the field, spurs bright as diamonds, and all in keeping—rode after me on the Friar—why I know not, now called Master Fred's hunter. And to do Bradly justice, if he turned himself out well, he turned his horses out equally to his credit, for they were the admiration of the field.

“I said Bradly rode after me, and thus by skirting Elm Tree Hill, by Peacock Farm, and down the Golden Lea, we saw much of the run.

“The first fox being killed, they returned to the Hall. When Mr. Jenkins declared that the appetite of fox-hunters was like

the Wall of China, and their thirst, added the butler, like elephants. He would not brew, not he, such beer another season, to be drank in hogsheads by the like of them. But the more they ate, and the more they drank, the more delighted was the Lord of Brooklands; so like our dear Dad, was it not, Fred?

“The eating and drinking over, they tried Low Bottom Copse; and as the Stagnater declared, flushed no end of woodcocks; but they also found what was far more to their liking, another fox—and, as he broke covert, there was a general cry of admiration and good feeling for the good old sportsman, Squire Western of Brooklands. ’Tis said they are about to give him a piece of plate; but more of this in my next. I could not follow far, for the hounds ran sharply in the direction of Winton; but Dad returned home late, and said they had had another clipper, but lost in the great coverts near Blackstone Mills. By-the-bye, the Earl sent me the brush of the first fox, which I preserve; the pets are all well; mama sends her love

to you both, and says you are sad boys for not writing.

“Your affectionate sister,

“GUSSY.”

“P.S.—Ploughshare appeared on his long-legged thorough bred, with a neck-tie that was marvellous, and a new pair of breeches. And Barleycorn had a waistcoat and a face beaming with good nature, somewhat a match as to colour, both being bright vermillion. I forgot to say that dear Nelly came to see the hounds on her pony, Valère—we are better friends each time we meet; she asked after my brothers, Fred in particular.”

We soon after received a visit from poor Selwyn—the change in his appearance was truly affecting—he said not a word, however of the past, but received us most warmly. Stated his intention of going abroad—he did so, and we rarely met again; some may ridicule feelings such as his were—I confess, I honour and respect them; so let them smile on.

Time and tide await no man's bidding ; and thus years rolled over the joys and sorrows of the Brooklands family. I must confess, however, that we had a good share of sunshine, and a life of more than common happiness was allotted to every member of the Old Hall. Each season had its joys—in summer-time we rode merrily over the beautiful scenery which for miles surrounded our woodland home ; now fishing parties were made, now a race in the park, pic-nics and archery meetings. I was growing apace, and was about to quit my home for the Continent ; our dear Dad, by the advice of others, having decided that as I was to serve in his Majesty's land-forces, thought a knowledge of the Gallic language would not only be a great addition to my Etonian accomplishments, but possibly, enable me to fight the French better in their own tongue, should another war perchance to break out. It was therefore decided that in the interim of my leaving school and that of my being gazetted as a full pay Cornet of Horse, that I should, as the saying is, go abroad ;

not, understand, to make the grand tour and home again—having learnt little and expended much—but to be domiciled for a time in La Belle France.

Gussy, was also growing tall—and, in truth, I must declare, that if she was not precisely beautiful, a more fascinating girl never graced a riding-habit or adorned a ball-room ; add to this, she was a firm-hearted talented puss, with a total absence of all affectation—and withal, very natural and very feminine. My younger brother and fellow-sportsman, having declared that after I left Eton he would have no more of it, was sent for change of air, and as he said, change of hounds, to the north. Whether the amiable clergyman with whom he resided, on the receipt of some score pounds per annum enlightened him deeply in classics or ought else, I will not pretend to say. But this I will venture to affirm ; that if as a mere boy he had ridden well with the Duke and the Earl, forsooth, his seat became firmer and his hand lighter, when he chanced, which was not seldom, to find himself well placed in

a good run with Lord Yarborough or the Holderness. But I must leave the hunting grounds of merrie England, for I am about for a season to visit foreign lands; not even there, however, did my love for horse or hound ever give place, when attainable, to other amusements or pursuits.

When my dear mother spoke of my going abroad, pardon her, but she appeared to fancy I was off to Kamschatka; and similar ideas, I confess, would at times intrude themselves on my own bright fancies. My best consolation for the time being, the hope that I should meet poor Selwyn again—possibly riding through Normandy on Parchment—on the same grounds as the Frenchman, who, on meeting an Englishman in Paris, who had come direct from London, requested information as to whether his friend, Mr. Jones, was quite well. The only thing I can say in my defence is, that a journey from the Vale of Brooklands to that of the Somme, was then somewhat more difficult to accomplish than has it been in later years—when Aldermen of the good City of London

can breakfast on beef-steaks at 9 A.M., and dine at Paris the same evening. However, the advance of civilization in its own peculiar sense—for I question whether it has not retarded, in the sense of many others, as regards the rough and smooth communication with the world—has a most inconceivable, if not an agreeable, way of opening the eyes of the young.

Therefore, come with me,—those who will it, across the rough waters of the Channel, and I will introduce you to Monsieur de Quequovillier, Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur, his fair daughter, Matilde, and his plain one, Clarisse—the latter, possibly for choice, though her nose was a wee bit too *retroucée*, at least her admirers so declared; as also to his fat and well-beloved spouse. It appears to me, however, that I had better, in the first place, introduce myself to their notice, in order that my portraits may be the more faithfully drawn.

CHAPTER II.

ALL the world knows that during the late French Revolution -- what was I about to say?—why, the great Revolution which took place in France, previous to the various other revolutions which have followed periodically in rapid succession, since Napoleon I. was Emperor—that England was overrun with impoverished emigrants, many of whom were men of vast acquirements, rank and station. Men possessed of high qualities, high morals, and warm hearts, who not approving of things as they were under Bonaparte, could only hope, that notwithstanding all their poverty and consequent

privations, for succour in a free country—until such time as the political storm then raging throughout Europe, would change the wind in their favour.

Among these emigrants, chance or the fate of the revolution, or possibly, the knowledge that the well-paid bishop of our neighbouring city had a Roman heart, as well as a Roman nose, or the splendour of the cathedral, or the organ, or what not—for I never clearly discovered the attraction—or what caused the inclination which induced him to travel thus far inland—but which, nevertheless, brought within a few short leagues of Brooklands, an amiable and high-minded Abbé of the ancient regime. Alike, a gifted and well-bred priest, a rare specimen of unbounded loyalty to a fat king, and unswerving bigotry in all connected with the Roman faith. But withal, a good French master, as a most agreeable old man. At all events, there he was, located in that Episcopal City, with little means and few friends; indeed, so scanty were the former, that necessity,

at all times a hard task-master, compelled him *nolens volens*, to pay his baker's bill by his brains. In fact, it was given out by a voice which reached Brooklands, in the shape of the "County Herald," that the Abbé B. Chanion, and so forth, of the Cathedral of ——— in France, was desirous to give lessons in his native tongue, to such young ladies and young gentlemen—to say nothing of old ones—who might be disposed to obtain for a small outlay, what was then an accomplishment, and is now almost an absolute necessity to those who move in good society. Not that people in general do speak French, but they fancy they do, and somehow or another make themselves understood—and French courtesy fills up the gap—and who dares gainsay their assertions—no one, certainly, would be justified save those who have had practical illustrations to the contrary, such as the following:—

"Ah! que j'ai mal au cœur pour vous, Mamselle;" said a young gentleman moving in what is termed polite society, to a charming well-bred French girl. "Ah! que j'ai

mal au cœur pour vous"—wishing to convey a sense of his admiration and love. He would have been somewhat surprised had she told him to leave the room with the least possible delay. But to return to the Abbé—he was forthwith solicited in all kindness and courtesy to aid my sister, Gussy, in the acquirement of a thorough knowledge of his mother tongue—but this was not all—the terms were left entirely to him, and if he received somewhat more than the usual stipend granted for such instruction, he also met with much gentle kindness and consideration which, however, none but the ignoble would have denied to his position, as also, much hospitality. Moreover, it was not then the fashion—the only word I can find to explain myself—to distrust, possibly detest a man, because he thought the Pope immaculate, or imagined that kneeling to a wooden cross, would make more easy his road to heaven.

So, notwithstanding that in his eyes we were heretics, in his heart the old man loved us gratefully and well, while we learned in

like manner to esteem him for his admirable qualities and kindly nature.

The era of Napoleon I. over, and the corpulent Bourbons restored by British bayonets on the throne of France, was a period of untold joy to the Abbé; and with tearful eyes and a grateful heart he came over to Brooklands, to bid us farewell ere he returned to his home and the country of his heart. Not in the Spanish fashion, however, did he bid us welcome—then and for ever—to his house, his horse, and his dog or his wife, which he might have done but that Abbés are single gentlemen; but in the true spirit of a Christian, he expressed a warm desire to do to us that which we had done for him, should chance or the world's ways lead any member of the Old Hall at home, to the precincts of his ecclesiastical calling. This time arrived sooner than he expected—and it having been decided that to France a “learning I should go, whether my mother was willing or no,” a letter was forthwith despatched to the good Abbé, putting his kind offers to the test, by requesting a know-

ledge of the city of his birth as of his affections ; as also his kind recommendation of a fit locale for one, so little versed in the world's ways—save, as regards riding to hounds and sporting, in the general acceptation of the term, as I was. In due course of time, true to his word at parting, the amiable reinstated emigrant wrote warmly and to the point. And having in courteous terms expressed the delight it afforded him, to be of service in any possible manner to any member of the Brooklands family, he proceeded to add that he was acquainted with an estimable Chevalier, Marchant de Laine, though he was, who for the annual payment of a few thousand francs, literally nothing from the Brookland rent-roll, would gladly receive me as one of his family—a jeune Anglais, so well-born and bred, as he knew his young friend, Master Fred, to be. Adding, that there would be no extra charge for looking after my morals, or my linen ; the Chevalier would take charge of the former himself, while the young ladies, his daughters, would kindly darn my stockings

and see to the starching of my shirts. As for my peccadilloes, of course he would personally absolve me; *du reste* he would be ready to receive me on my arrival, and introduce me in due form to the amiable family. Thus, my fate was settled, my effects duly packed, and in company with the Lord of Brooklands, I travelled to the Metropolis; when there, some little addition was made to my already superfluous baggage. And by the advice of an Etonian friend whom I chanced to meet in St. James' Street, and who had gone through a Continental ordeal, somewhat similar to that I was about to commence, I purchased a knife, a pair of scissors, sundry packets of needles, and so forth. "By St. Hubert!" I exclaimed, on his recommending the latter articles—"what on earth do you take me for! I am going abroad to learn French, and possibly to fit myself for the life-guards, or the diplomatic line, should I find the former not to my taste, not to darn stockings or sew buttons on my shirts." On this he went into a fit of laughing, as well he

might, adding, " Well, Fred Western though you be, you have more of the jolly green in you than I imagined: who ever imagined that any of the Brookland family could ever be brought to cross his legs on anything but a pigskin. But I see, you have much to learn yet; mark me, the being enabled to sew a button on your linen garments is by no means an acquisition derogatory to a gentleman, even should he be placed in that high position as representing our gracious Sovereign at some foreign Court. I will bet you half a crown to sixpence, many the button Palmerston has tacked on his breeches, and many an ambassador can sew with a sharp needle. But listen to me, Fred—since I left Eton, I have learnt something of mankind and their ways. I never go on the Moors without a supply of tobacco—there is nothing like it if you wish to gain the heart of a Highlander. Baccy failing, get snuff or tea; to an English game-keeper I offer a cigar—a tip is never refused by either—but to come to the point:

a knife, a pair of scissors, or a needle, a yard of thread, actually made in England and bought in London, will make more progress in the affections of Mademoiselle Matilde, I think you so called her, till you speak French, than all else under the sun." So needles I bought, and having bid adieu to my dear old Dad with a heavy heart, for the first time in my life, I prepared to cross the most sickening waters I know of, save those of the Bay of Biscay or Pentland Frith, both of which I subsequently endured.

I shall now describe that, which is now as familiar to the people of England as Free Trade; but which, in the days when I was young was rarely accomplished without some little pleasurable difficulty. In fact, a journey from the proud Metropolis of old England to a city of Normandy, now so familiar to thousands who know nothing whatever of England, was not then solely an affair of steam. However, I found myself in due time at the Ship at Dover, discussed a good tea-dinner, that is tea with

sundries, *ad libitum*, of a solid nature. Retired to bed and to sleep, rose early, performing precisely the same agreeable duty as that I had performed previous to retiring — save, that when the sun is up, people term that a breakfast, which after it has set, becomes tea or a tea-dinner.

And then forthwith went on board the fast steaming steamer, Eclipse—which said steamer, by advertisement assured the public that two hours was the ordinary passage from Dover to Calais, weather permitting, which it rarely did permit. Nevertheless, I stood on the deck of the Eclipse like many others, pleased for the time with the novelty, hoping for the best, but prepared for the worst—for although the mariners or steam sailors declared, though the breeze was dead against us it was light ; I confess, that it appeared to me to be most disagreeably heavy, inasmuch, as with one hand I held on my hat, while with the other I held myself on my legs, by clinging to the side of the vessel.

To those who, having read so far, have

become in the slightest degree interested in the fate of Fred Western, a slight description of my sea voyage may be acceptable. It lasted, if recollection bear me out, about four hours and a-half, instead of two. For the first five minutes I looked with a positive feeling of affection on the white cliffs of *perfid*e Albion, and then at the fast fleeting clouds, with trepidation. Going out of harbour the sea rolled dreadfully—to this I can swear, notwithstanding the contradiction of a whiskered mariner, who smilingly declared it was quite smooth water, as if I could not see with my own eyes, and feel with my own feelings—as I very soon did, an all-overishness. I then went below to look at the cabin, saw a fat woman in one berth, and a pretty girl in another—had she been an angel she might have remained there, and gone to the bottom, for all I cared; thence my all-overishness increasing, I rushed up the ladder again to look around me. But human nature must succumb to the will of the mighty ocean—rude sea. I could no longer deny the all-overishness,

for it was soon all over with me. Thence oblivion—I recollect little more, save that a corpulent gentleman, probably a City alderman, was groaning piteously by my side, till the steward called out, “Now then, young gentleman, here we are; what luggage have you?” Luggage, I exclaimed; not five minutes before I would have given him all I possessed, present and expecting, to have thrown me overboard; and mortgaged my heritage to find myself back again at dear old Brooklands.

But I was fairly standing on the land of La Belle France, ere I knew I could stand, having been summarily ejected from the deck of the Steamer into a boat alongside, and thence hoisted on to the pier. And there I stood in my boots, certainly not in my glory—for La Gloire is admitted to be the sole property of Frenchmen; moreover, no youth felt more miserable than did I. People were wont to assert in former days, as are they in these present, that the very moment a traveller puts foot on a foreign shore, he is assailed by innumerable civili-

ties. Men, women, and children, so say foreign tourists, are ready to receive you and your belongings into their safe keeping, with irresistible polite offers to conduct the stranger to the best hotel in France ; for my part, these courtesies might have been tendered to me, for all I knew to the contrary ; but alas ! my head was still too giddy to recollect aught that occurred—indeed, I had so utterly succumbed to the sickness of the sea, that I scarcely cared at the moment whether I laid my head to rest under the roof of the *Lion d'or*, or *Le Diable blue*, so that I could get rid of the physical and mentally annihilating sensation. But in due time fresh air and dry land—the recollection that my great ancestor had fought and won his golden spurs, at the battle of Cressy, moreover that I was a Western direct from Brooklands—cheered me up ; and, having been neglected by the hangers-on, who were assembled from numerous hotels, to pounce on sick and tired travellers, who doubtless, from my silence and insignificance, fancied I was scarcely worth the catching, I ac-

cepted the proffered attentions of a youth of more than common personal attractions and activity, who forthwith saw that my belongings were well cared for at the Custom House, and then preceded me to that which, in days lang syne, was one of the best of French hotels, the celebrated Mons. Desseins. Being then and there comfortably located, my inward juvenility gradually recovered its accustomed serenity—a serenity which so rapidly increased to an unusual state of hunger, that when a waiter, in tolerable English, requested my attention to the fact, that dinner would be served at the table d'hôte at five, to a minute, and desired to be informed as to whether Monsieur would form one at that social board, or be served alone, I replied at once, that I would dine then and there, or any where, provided that I had enough, and to spare, and above all something appetisant.

Be not afraid, I entreat you, that have dined at half the table d'hôtes on the Continent, that I am about to inflict on your patience a detailed account of what we had

for dinner, or who composed the company, on this my first day's introduction to an absolute French repast; suffice that it was well cooked and well served, and without fear of contradiction, I can assert, that the landlord must have gained very little profit from my share of the sum total paid, while the satisfaction afforded by the gastronomic art of his chef-de-cuisine, decided me to proceed on my journey the following morning, instead of returning by the way I had come, which I mentally declared I would do in the midst of my agonies of sea-sickness. One thing, however, I do clearly recollect, that my seat at the dinner-table was ill selected, inasmuch as on my left sat, as I should imagine, a retired haberdasher of the good town of Calais, who, from his daily attendance at the hotel, and consequent passing associations with English travellers, or di Englese, as he termed them, had managed to pick up a few words of my native tongue, and therefore fancied he spoke the language, and thus having half covered me with abominable coarse snuff, every time he supplied his

long nose, on each occasion begging me milles pardons, he thus accosted me—

“Monsieur is one Milord.”

“I have not that honour, sir.”

“The son of one Milord?”

“No, sir.”

“De broder?”

“Nor that either—(try again, old gentleman—this aside.)”

“Your fader is one land propretaire?”

“Nearer the mark. Yes, he has land.”

“Oh, I see one of di rich Englese propretairés.”

“My father is an English gentleman.”

“Oh! I taught so at di first. And you go to our beautiful Paris to see the sites?”

“No, Monsieur.”

“Vere den?”

This was rather too good a joke, though a literal fact, so I replied to see the field of Waterloo.

“Pish!” he exclaimed, thrusting snuff enough into his nose to bury a mouse; “toujours ce maudit Vaterloo.” And with this he disengaged his napkin from under his

chin, and exit with another pish, my left-hand neighbour.

On my right sat a silent Piedmontese lady, most unquestionably fat to overflowing, a sort of woman, whose instep hung over the sides of her shoes ; her swelling hands here and there appearing between the cracks of her gloves, while her whole human form divine was literally like an overdone sausage, bursting the seams of her silk-gown. Moreover, I could have sworn to her being past forty, without fear of being committed for perjury. Fair she might have been to those who admire full-blown nature ; but I confess, in my youth I had no such inclination—in fact, I prefer your slight beauties, even in mine old age. The good lady was silent, however, and that was something in her favour ; but alas, that silence was an absolute necessity, for had she spoken, it would have been impossible for her to consume a third of the provisions which passed from innumerable dishes into her mouth. And hence who can say, for the power of inward woman to hold, what vanished by throat, then so

peculiarly astonishing and annoying to me, I have never since forgotten or seen equalled. With true French politeness, the waiter of course submitted each dish to her inspection, ere it passed to me, and thence to my snuffy companion on the left. From soup to bouilli, bouilli to vol-au-vent, vol-au-vent to gigot, gigot to sweets, nothing came amiss to her. Suffice, they were offered, accepted, and vanished; heigho, jack, and begone. Be it recollected, I had breakfasted. What then, the sea had deprived me of its sustaining effects; however, I was a growing youth, and ere the hour of five had sounded on the clocks of Calais, I felt that I could have eaten a Frenchman, if stewed in champagne. It was by no means pleasant, therefore, was it? I appeal more particularly to you who may perchance be reading a few pages of Fred Western's escapades, ere dinner is announced, hour seven, and no luncheon, to see tit-bit by tit-bit vanish from my longing eyes, at the very moment it was actually within reach of my fork. I was accustomed to what is termed a good cuisine, and I confess,

therefore, I was astonished at the excellent fare provided at this the first table-d'hôte I had ever dined at. But to see the wing of a capon smothered in fresh water-cresses, which I had decided on, appropriated without ceremony, and demolished, by this my devouring neighbour, was far from satisfactory. I contented myself, however, with the hope of sharing the remnants of a savoury smelling vol-au-vent à la financier, with my friend on the left ; but it came only sufficiently near to enable me to inhale its aroma, and vanished as had the fowl.

Some mouton coutlets were then passed round, which were strongly recommended as having been well flavoured with truffles. I well knew their taste, few Eton boys do not. Moreover, I had a particular liking for them. There were six coutlets in the dish when it reached my fat friend. By the powers of gastronomy, who could have believed it ; not I, forsooth, even had an Archbishop sworn to the fact, had I not witnessed it with my own eyes, she helped herself to four, truly, they were small ; but my politeness—

I was taught politeness by Gussy's gouvernante, and I am not vain enough to suppose, that it was natural good breeding, which left me only the alternative of dividing the remaining two with my left-hand neighbour, or acting in the manner that had called forth my anger. And so on from the beginning to the end of the dinner, yet this "lady," defend the title, paid the same bill as did I. I only hope she slept as well; that no night-marish visions broke on her slumbers; if so, and she kicked, Monsieur Dessein's bedding must have passed muster anywhere.

Cheerful was the first morning that I awoke in the land of France. The sun shone brightly into my room, and having risen early, I prepared to mount the coupé of a diligence. Railways were not. I had enjoyed a cup of *café au lait*, excellent of its kind, and was about to take my place, when I beheld, as I stood on the wheel, holding by a leather strap, my fat neighbour of the previous day's dinner, take her seat in the interior.

CHAPTER II.

MY impressions of La Belle France, as far as my journey on that occasion was concerned, was by no means pleasing. However, my heart was tolerably light, considering that I had so recently parted from all that I then loved on earth, and my age was such, that all things interested me. Moreover, my companion de voyage, Monsieur Chapel by name, the worthy conductor, by whose side I sat, was a specimen of his profession, worthy of all imitation and admiration, and we had scarcely rattled over two leagues of pavé, ere we were sworn friends, a friendship which literally lasted during the whole period of my remaining under the roof of Mon. Le Chevalier de Quequovillier, and not unfrequently did I visit the Bureau, or I should say the Hotel where the diligence

was wont to stop, as it passed through A—, that I might offer a *petit vir*, or some trifle for his acceptance, till at last he declared, *Que ce jeune Chasseur de Broklands*, was a brave *garçon*, notwithstanding my being English. How did this friendship commence? I shall tell you. As we were passing near a small covert, a hare crossed the road, in front of the diligence, in an instant my mind went back across the Channel, and I was once more talking with the old Stagnater. My heart was at the old Hall at home. Be it observed, that I was not totally ignorant of French, indeed, I could read as well as understand the language tolerably. Speak it, however, I certainly could not, save in a manner, which manner may be satisfactory to some, who declare their knowledge of foreign tongues; but to others, it strikes me it will be sufficiently ludicrous, if not amusing. However, I had courage, and a determination to encounter difficulties with resolution, so I launched at once into the following conversation—

“*Conducteur.*”

"Oui, Mushieur." Conducteurs always pronounce Monsieur thus.

"Vous avez, des levers, en France."

"Levers, Mushier, non. Je ne connoit pas le nom."—

"Levers de chasse."

"La chasse, oui, oui Mushire on chasse beaucoup en France. Je suis Chasseur moi meme, mas fois, je l'aime à la folie."

This was enough; from thence till we arrived within a league or two of Montreuil, where we remained an hour to dine, we never ceased talking of hares and foxes, red-legged partridges, and even wolves were discussed—how discussed it would be in vain to say—suffice we managed somehow or another to explain matters with the free-masonry of sportsmen. And I found that although his sporting tastes were sufficiently extravagant, they were truthful; in fact, that he loved the metier well, and had formerly held the position of forester to Mons. Le Baron of——. As we approach Montreuil we deviated a little from sporting conversation, and the fat lady inside the diligence came on the tapis. "Who is she,"

I exclaimed, "does she pay double?—are your springs sound, your axles patent? If not, I question our arrival. Where is she going?" "Je n'en sais rein," he replied, laughing, "save that she is going to Paris." "She ought to take two places," I added, "and pay for two dinners, if she eats at Montreuil as she did at Calais." "Monsieur is droll," he added, laughing again, "you must get a good start—help yourself—there is no time for politeness at such dinners." On our arrival, I followed his advice to the letter; sat on the right instead of the left of the lady, who opened her mouth for the first time in my presence without putting anything in, to ask me if I was going to Paris; on my replying in the negative, she shut it again till the bouilli was placed on the table, and the process of the preceding evening was renewed with a vigour positively astounding; but the supply was good and substantial, and our party only three. She returned to her place in the interior, and I never saw her after that day. Whenever I have the nightmare, however, I always fancy

that woman is sitting on my chest. I wonder what has become of her ; possibly she died from repletion.

Late in the afternoon we entered an avenue of poplars, diversified occasionally by an avenue of apple trees, till at length we entered that city wherein I was domiciled for eight months, if not the happiest, unquestionably not the most disagreeable of my life. Those who have travelled in the coupé of a French diligence are tolerably well acquainted with the bruising effects sustained on rattling over the ill-paved and worse lighted streets of a French provincial town, even though that town possessed the dignified honour of being classed as a city. The night, uncheered by the brilliancy of a summer's moon, had closed in ere we reached the gates, and here we were delayed unnecessarily a long half hour, ere we were permitted to pass within the fortifications. Whether this delay was caused by French politeness, or that there was anything dangerous in my appearance, I am not prepared to say. For when we reached the city walls there

were no passengers save Fred Western without, and the fat lady within the lumbering vehicle; therefore I concluded, as well they might, they felt her all over, yet found nothing but solid human flesh and flannel petticoats; I could excuse them for this search, however, far better than for many others to which I have been an eye-witness, for few in their right senses could believe she was all woman. However, when we parted, which we did shortly after at the Hotel de l'Europe—it was the last long look I ever took of a form so positively grand in all its rotundity of outline—my good wishes went with her, dear soul, for I feel assured no bitterness of disposition could have found place in so smooth and globe-like a form. But I thought then, as have I at times since, that did she require to purchase a grave, which is the rule in foreign districts, that she would spoil at least half an acre of good potato land. But we rumble and roll, and jerk and jolt, through narrow, ill-paved streets, now swerving to the right, almost into the window of a confectioner's shop,

now whirling round a corner, as I thought with the certainty of annihilation. The stout Norman horses, with their tails tied up, and their bells tingling, trotted briskly through the streets, whirling the creaking coach in a manner which literally caused me to hold on as firmly as had I done on board the vessel. But Monsieur Chapel laughed, and assured me there was no danger; moreover, that the postillion who now drove us was a perfect master of his art—so crack, crack, bang, went his whip. And while every moment I was fancying I should be sent flying into the first-floor window of some house near to which we passed, the great machine came to a halt in the port cocher of the Hotel de l' Europe. Waiters ran out, as did also the chef-de-cuisine in a white paper cap, doubtless all anxiety to behold a number of hungry travellers, for whose unfastidious appetites the contents of his simmering carasols awaited. Both the one and the other were on this occasion, however, doomed to disappointment, when they beheld descending from the coupé, a slight English

youth, as from the interior, my porpoise friend aforesaid—a disappointment which I fancy must have been shared by the landlord when he received her fifty sous for supper. I had scarcely touched the earth in safety, ere Monsieur Chapel advanced by the side of a little old man dressed in full canonicals, exclaiming, “Voilà! Monsieur, L’Abbé. Voilà! le jeune Anglais, que vous Cherches, et ma fois c’est un brave Garçon, et un chasseur a folle.” “Ah! dare you are, indeed, my young friend, safe and well. Welcome, a thousand times, to La Belle France.” Anything but belle thought I, at least, so much of it as I had then seen; but I could scarcely desire to hurt the feelings of the good old priest, who was then warmly shaking me by the hand, looking all the while as if he could have embraced me, in memory of former days. I liked him all the better, however, that he so far dispensed with this portion of his affections. And now I must be excused that I give the conversations of Frenchmen even in my native tongue, in the first place,

that printers make sad havoc with foreign languages; and secondly, that Monsieur Chapel had studied natural history, but had neglected his French grammar.

“Well,” said the Abbé, “my dear boy Frederick will tell me by-and-bye of my charmante Miss Gussy, and all he has left at the dear Brooklands. But you must be tired and hungry, and I must introduce you to your future friends, as I hope you will ever find them. Ah! my good boy, I am charmed to see you in my own France,” and he pressed my hands again, while it appeared to me the old man’s eyes really filled with tears in proof of his grateful affection, and revived recollections, by my presence, of those so dear to me. Boy I scarcely considered myself, or wished to be considered, whatever I may do now. But his friendly, almost parental, reception was surpassingly delightful to one who felt himself among strangers. Chapel now advanced to tell me that my effects were all ready to be sent to Monsieur de Quequovillier’s, and that he was about to leave again *en route*

for Paris; so I slipped a five-franc piece into his hand, and he bid me adieu, declaring he believed I was a veritable *milord* *chasseur*, and he knew not what, into the bargain, inasmuch, as he rarely touched an *ecu*, and had never known an *Abbé* come to meet a passenger before.

"We will now go to the *Rue de Cocques*," remarked the *Abbé*, "the diligence is later than usual, and the ladies are doubtless all anxiety to see a member of a family of whom they have heard me speak so much. They are, as you say in England, my parishioners, and I, as we say in France, am their confessor."

"Are you, *Monsieur l'Abbé*," said I to myself, "then I must be on my best behaviour while there."

"But," he continued, "to-morrow you must visit me in my own home, and tell me all you can of the dear ones at home." "I will do so readily, Sir;" I replied, "they will all be rejoiced to hear of your being well. You are not forgotten at home; Gussy often speaks of you, and so do we all." "Well,

well, and I think much of their kindness when kindness was more than wanted. But here we are," and he pulled the bell which hung at the large gates of a house which appeared to be of some extent, and situated in a narrow street near the ramparts. A small door was immediately opened, and we stepped through the larger one into a spacious yard or port-lacher. The door of the house was also forthwith thrown aside, and in a moment I found myself dazzled by the light, as almost in the arms of another fat woman. Heaven help me from the whole race of fat females, I felt myself about to say; but then I thought she must be the cook, for cooks when dressed in their best attire do give way to silk gowns in old England; and I could have no possible objection to a fat cook, when I beheld the Abbé touch both of her cheeks with his lips, and knowing that it was not precisely the place to confess a cook, I was for the moment, as dear old Forster would have declared, stagnated.

But the Abbé relieved me from my stag-

nation by taking my hand and putting it into that of her whom I afterwards discovered to be a most amiable old lady, though in person I had not belied her; he added, "This, Madame Quequovillier, is my young friend, Fred Western. Treat him with half the kindness his good father treated me, and he will be very happy under your roof. And now let me ask for the Chevalier, and your charming daughters." "My daughters will be here directly, and as glad as I am to welcome Monsieur Western. The Chevalier begged I would excuse him for an hour."

I shall pass over my introductions; they are common place. Suffice that the young ladies soon appeared; then supper; then the Chevalier. The Abbé was pressed to remain—there was an omelet that he would find excellent, a potato, salad, and sausages, which were undeniable. But no; he was an abstemious old gentleman, and having begged that I would visit him on the morrow—on which one of the demoiselles promised to shew me the way—he bid us all good night. Never,

as long as life remains to me, shall I forget that evening. There I was, uprooted, I may say, from the home scenes of dear old Brooklands—its woods and its park-lands, its trout streams and lakes, its stables and hunters, kennels and dogs—but above and beyond all, the dear ones there assembled, and replanted, even in those days in a very brief time, in the very midst of a French family, only one of whom could speak one word of English, while I could speak very few sentences of French. Nevertheless, we got on wonderfully well—and, between the innumerable questions put to me by the whole party, I managed to eat a very good supper; and thus my first evening certainly gave me reason to believe that the good Abbé had selected a most agreeable abode—a belief which I by no means retracted as days passed on. I have said not a word, however, as regards the society with whom I was about to be so familiarly associated, save that Madame Quequovillier was a fat lady, in a silk gown—and at the first moment I really imagined

that all ladies of a certain age in France must necessarily be somewhat robust—for a more kind-hearted old lady never existed, and I must do her the justice to say, that her whole attention seemed devoted to my comfort. Of the Chevalier, I shall say little—he was a true Frenchman, and a Bonapartist of the most decided character; of the class, bourgeois, he loved his ease, his pipe and his chasse after coffee, himself above all—and rarely fasted on Friday, a source of constant amusement to me, and of anger to Madame. On these days a dish of coutlets, or some other substantial dish, was provided for my particular use; of course I made it an invariable rule to offer them to the circle, adding, as I came to the Chevalier, leave the ladies to fast; of course, having been employed all the day in your bureau, you can scarcely be expected to live on omelets and salads—take my advice, eat and be thankful, and tell the Abbé I recommended you to do so, not wishing to be uncivil to your young English friend—“ma foi, vous avez raison,” he replied, “qu’il est drole ce jeune, Anglais.”

The young ladies laughed, Madame scolded, but to no effect, till it became a divided dish, and I invariably said, here are our coutlets, Chevalier. But of the young ladies, decidedly a more agreeable subject—the elder was named Matilde. How shall I describe her—the task is by no means easy—I shall boldly attempt it; even the bright blue eyes of my home-playmate, Nelly, whom I had left in the vales of merrie England, even the companion of my sweet sister, Gussy, were insufficient to save me entirely from the influence with which she soon enslaved me—young as I was, scarcely seventeen, who will not excuse me; and had she been fond of hounds and horses, who knows, but I might have deprived a most amiable, professional man, in after years, of a fac-simile of the personal charms of her mother. When I first beheld her, however, as she entered the room, with her younger sister, Clarisse, ere she had opened her mouth, I may fairly say she was all but beautiful—indeed, her profile was beautiful, and her figure, though gradually increasing to what is

termed, *en bon point*, was almost equal to her face—her teeth, however, were defective; and, although my first impression was that of admiration, I confess it subsequently almost became love; luckily, it never reached that climax, inasmuch as I was not too young to discover she was, if not precisely a coquette, selfishly fond of admiration. But what of that, domesticated as I was, almost as a son, in the house for eight months, to say the least of it, with one of the cleverest girls I have ever met with; for, without any advantages in the way of masters, she had made herself a perfect mistress of the Italian language. She could also read English, and I had scarcely been three months in the house ere she managed to speak it; in music, however, she was by no means a proficient; and mount a horse, she would not. Her languishing dark blue eyes, which she used most effectually, her glossy dark hair, and her winning ways—that is, when she liked it, for at times they were anything but winning—were quite sufficient to subdue a lad in his teens. She

owned to being two-and-twenty—I fancy she was about twenty-four; this was one of the companions and playmates selected for me by the Abbé—good old man, in his eyes I was always his dear boy, Fred. But what of Clarisse, her sister—nature, as far as personal appearance was concerned, had been far less kind to her; and this fact, acting on a somewhat hasty mind and jealous disposition, tended to injure much a disposition which was otherwise charming. Her figure was light and graceful, her face cruelly marked with the small-pox, and her accomplishments, possibly from neglect, were by no means equal to the more favoured sister. What was the consequence: the elder was, in fact, left entirely to assist in my French lesson or drawing lessons—watch the progress I made in fencing and German, walk, talk, eat bon-bons, or do anything else, wise or silly, as might have been—while the younger was only occasionally permitted to assist in such pleasures, being generally occupied in household matters, or any other avocations not agreeable to the

elder. I was not too young, however, to perceive that she had qualities of heart and firmness of character, as far as sincerity was concerned, far superior; and this feeling on my part often induced me to shew her attentions, and, I trust, display fits of generosity towards her, always gratefully received, when not under the controul of Matilde's blue eyes—which caused occasionally little scenes of jealousy and temper that served admirably to prevent the current of my life passing too smoothly. Such were the companions with whom I was thrown into daily, nay, almost hourly, communion for eight months. Oh! how often in after life have I recalled to mind their many acts of kindness, and almost sisterly tenderness—when suffering, watching my sick-bed; when in health, partaking of my studies as my pleasures; and I may honestly say, that I learnt more French from their sweet lips, than ever did I from Monsieur Dubois, to whom I paid a monthly stipend, in order that he might hear from me what were our pursuits at the old Hall at home.

I repeat, I have often thought of them, if not with absolute affection, with most pleasing recollections and esteem.

Supper over, Madame Quequovillier kindly suggested that Monsieur Western had had a long journey, and was doubtless greatly fatigued, at the same time offering to shew me the apartments prepared for my reception.

To this I had no sort of objection, inasmuch as I had gone through much excitement, and really felt disposed to find myself alone.

So having bid good night to the Chevalier, preceded by Madame, and followed by her daughters, who expressed themselves desirous to see that every thing was in due order, I took possession of my apartments, consisting of a cheerful and convenient sitting room—not that I ever sat in it much—and an equally agreeable bedroom. When they had departed, I looked around me. The night previous I had scarcely had time to think, moreover an hotel is not precisely the place to observe change, but here I was domiciled, and the utter difference of

all things around me to those I had left at home, were enough and more than enough to keep me awake, weary as I was, for hours. The highly polished oak floor, the absence of carpet, the alcove in which my bed was placed; in fact, the practical knowledge, made evident in all things around me, that I was in another land, made thoughts fly fast to persons and things of every day life at home. Then Selwyn, where was he? Possibly not far distant—how many leagues to Paris—was there any hunting or sporting in the neighbourhood of A——; and then I dozed, and slept, and dreamt, but neither Nelly or Gussy appeared to me in my dreams. I beheld only the Abbé walking on the lawn of Brooklands, with the companion of my journey. But at length I slept soundly, till Madame Quequovillier knocked at my door, and bid me arise, for it was already past the usual hour for the family breakfast.

So I arose, and having quickly dressed, descended to the saloon, not forgetting, how-

ever, as I unpacked my belongings, the needles and scissors. As I joined the circle I found the Chevalier had already departed for his bureau ; but the ladies came forward with anxious inquiries as to the manner in which I had passed the night, and gave me their hands to shake, which I did, feeling half inclined to kiss the younger ones, they looked so fresh and well dressed. Having taken my seat at the breakfast table, and accepted the offered cup of *café-au-lait* prepared by the fair Matilde, I produced my treasures. To Madame I offered for acceptance a box of cotton and sundry packets of needles ; to Matilde a very beautiful little case containing a knife and a pair of scissors ; to Clarisse a pair of scissors and some needles, leaving the remainder to be shared as they liked. Why I gave the best present to Matilde without hesitation I cannot say, save that she was the prettiest and I was seventeen. Be it as it may, the effect was wonderful. I thought she would have embraced me with delight, at least, I had sufficient knowledge of a pretty

woman's face instantly to discover that her eyes thanked me alike for my discrimination and good taste, in thinking her precisely what she thought herself, and what she really was, the pleasantest as well as the prettiest person I met with in the city of A——, if not precisely the most loveable. And consequently, ere the day was over, instead of the knife and scissors cutting our love in two, we had become sworn friends. While Clarisse in her extacies at actually being the possessor of a pair of English scissors, forgot the knife, and Madame's round face glowed with absolute satisfaction as she looked at the needles. A thousand thanks and acknowledgments were vouchsafed me, and my generosity and kindness were lauded to the skies.

"Oh! what a love of a knife! what scissors!" exclaimed Matilde.

"Indeed, what scissors, what polish, what steel!" added Clarisse.

"And such needles and thread!" chimed in Madame Quequovillier, "really you are too good, Monsieur Vestern."

"Mere trifles," I added, producing really

a first-rate knife, which I had purchased for myself, and which in my gratification at their positive delight, I was determined to give to the Chevalier, "and here is a present for the Chevalier, if he will accept it."

"Ah ! quel bijou !" they all exclaimed, "what a treasure ! what blades ! Papa will be enchanted." And truly was he, when he came in to dinner ; for I believe had I offered them each a jewel of some price, they would not have been more charmed.

"Say no more, say no more, I pray you ; they are the merest trifles ; the cost of the whole literally nothing. But the Customs prevented my offering anything more worthy your acceptance." "Escourt was right," I added to myself, "English knives, scissors, and needles are unquestionably the weapons with which to conquer French ladies, however the men may succumb to our bayonets."

Breakfast over, Madame begged to be excused, she had her household duties to attend to ; poor Clarisse also vanished, and I was left alone with Matilde. She looked

again at the present which I had given to her, and I looked at her face, and regretted that she could not speak with her mouth shut, and then out into a rather pretty garden; we then looked at each other again, and then we both laughed, and I fancy I blushed. If I did so, it was from the thoughts which at the moment crossed my mind with reference to those I had left in England, inasmuch as I found myself comparing my companion's face with those of Gussy and Nelly, the only two faces which were ever fairly engraven on my heart. And as I did so, I could but confess in truth that she was handsomer than either, but wanting in all their bright and speaking intelligence. She was, in fact, a girl to admire, not to love; and yet ere eight months had passed over my head, she endeavoured to convince me I did love her in spite of myself.

“Will Monsieur walk round our garden this fine morning.”

This I perfectly understood and readily consented—on which she departed, returning

immediately with a very pretty bonnet on ; and we walked forth to that, which to an Englishman, accustomed to a most beautiful garden superintended by a loved mother and sister, was anything but a source of admiration ; however, there was an arbour and some pear-trees, the fruit of which, when ripe, was excellent, and a few flowers. We took a turn or two, and then sat down in the arbour. The weather was very warm — Matilde took off her bonnet, and with the freedom and elegance of a French girl, though certainly not with the nature and innocence of an English one, shook out her glossy curls, and as I looked at her profile, I thought it charming.

“ You are fond of flowers, Monsieur Western ? ” They all called me Monsieur Western for a fortnight, then Monsieur Fred, and then Freddy.

“ Yes, very.”

“ Have you a large garden in England ? ”

“ Yes, a most beautiful garden.”

“ Are your mother and sister fond of gardening ? ”

"Yes, as ladies garden—but we have several gardeners."

"Is your sister pretty? do you love her?"

"Yes, both—but I see you have a dog;" as a black poodle, rather a handsome dog of his kind approached, "what do you call him?"

"Le petit corporal; for shortness, however, he is generally called Nap—you will find him very amusing."

"Come here, Nap, my good fellow;" I said, "come here."

"You forget," said Matilde, "that French dogs do not understand English, speak to him in French, his own language." I did so, at least in such French as I could command; and he responded instantly. And a most interesting companion did I find him; a more accomplished dog, in fact, was rarely pupped; he could do all that dogs could do, and something more than most.

"You appear fond of dogs," observed Matilde, "do you keep many in England?"

“Yes, twenty at least, but they are most of them sporting dogs. Are they fond of sporting in France,” I asked, “is there any game in this neighbourhood—have you any horses—are there any hounds?” All this and more I endeavoured to explain in half French, half English, but my fair companion appeared to be little interested either in dogs or horses—she was civil to Nap when he amused her, nothing more. And I fancy her idea of hunting, and racing, and sporting in general, was very undefined—a sort of John Bullish amusement—totally inconsistent with balls, flirtations, and admiration.

However, she promised to introduce me to a Monsieur Cheyreul, the Chasseur, par excellence of the city, for whom she appeared to have a thorough contempt; however, the conversation again reverted to England and Brooklands, and ere we quitted the arbour, she had tolerably ascertained my real position in life. The amount, or probable amount of the Brooklands rent-roll, as also my tastes and habits. In fact, I passed an hour or two very agreeably that hot morning, my

second in France, and learnt my first French lesson from a very pretty French girl, in an arbour. As was the custom among the class to which the Chevalier belonged, the family dined early, and we were disturbed from our agreeable idleness by the voice of Clarisse, who came by command of Madame to know if Monsieur Western would consent to dine at two, and whether he preferred poultry to meat. "Any hour you like, Miss Clarisse," I replied, "and anything your good mother selects, save frogs."

"Frogs!" she replied, "then Englishmen do really imagine that we live on frogs."

"Of course we do; on precisely the same grounds that Frenchmen imagine we eat nothing but roast beef and plum pudding."

"Well, frogs you certainly shall not have."

"I trust not—without they are produced as a curiosity to enable me, when I return to Brooklands, to give an opinion as to the taste. Neither let me have beef or plum pudding, for you do not understand them; moreover, I have already had a specimen of

the French cuisine, and I shall be perfectly satisfied with anything your good mother thinks proper to give."

"Monsieur is very kind," said Clarisse, we shall do our best to please him." On this she departed, leaving me to idle away another hour with her sister. It was scarcely an idle one, however, inasmuch as I dashed at once into a language of which I then knew little—and if, by so doing, I caused many smiles and much agreeable and good-humoured laughter on the part of my handsome companion, I also profited by her timely corrections.

The family dined early, which during summer, was by no means disagreeable—and having been taught to consider punctuality at meals one of the courtesies of life, I entered the saloon, as they termed the drawing-room, as the clock struck two. The Chevalier was there before me, already impatient for dinner—he had been engaged all the morning in wool speculations, and to judge from his smiling face, he was well pleased with the state of the market ; he rub-

bed his hands together, and once more bid me welcome to France. And when I presented the knife, he looked at it again and again, and reopened the several blades—and at last declared the English were really clever in their way;—and in fact, as he put it carefully in his pocket, that he was enchanted. I shall pass over the dinner—it was all I desired, and more—not so, the diners. Never was there a greater contrast than the four persons who were my companions, though all of one family—Madame, kind and amiable, appeared to me as precisely adapted, both by habit and education, for a nurse, head-cook, or a housekeeper. And although she had lost the chance of being either, when she vowed to love and honour the Chevalier, she still in an easy manner practically performed the duties of them all; a custom or habit among those of her station in France, rather to be commended than otherwise; but she lived in days when a domestic education was considered preferable to the system of the era which followed, when the vain endeavour to learn a little of

everything not even requisite to the learner, ends in the learning of nothing correctly. She came to table with a red, but clean face, and if her manners were not polished, they were equally inoffensive. At times, I discovered her superintending a stew pan; at others assisting in the making of the beds—in fact, her household duties were never neglected; and I must add, neither were her duties towards her cher Monsieur Fred, which she had learned to call me ere we parted. In fact, her busy hours at an end, she would take her work and sit with us during the long summer's evenings, or walk, or join cheerfully in conversation—and, on such occasions, I no longer recollected that she had concocted the excellent ragout I had eaten at dinner, or emptied out my washhand-basin after breakfast. The Chevalier, for so I always briefly termed him, much to his amusement, when I had been domiciled a week, was by no means like his sposa. If I misjudge him not, he was a cunning man; he believed himself a shrewd man—he certainly was not a wise, or a clean one; and

though on all occasions kind and just to me, in little matters he never pleased me, and I confess, I rather liked than esteemed him. He generally appeared at dinner in a short grey shooting-jacket, which he wore all the morning in his office, in fact, everywhere else, with the exception of Sundays, when he was clean shaved, and wore a black coat, with the red ribbon in his button-hole. He had two detestable habits, of which I informed Gussy in my first letter to Brooklands ; in her reply, which I shall give by-and-bye—she says, as for the Marchant de Laine, he is insufferable. The two habits were, rarely washing his hands for dinner, and picking his teeth with his fork—consider him a gentleman who will, Chevalier though he was. His daughters, Clarisse, at least, though given to dishabille in the morning, almost invariably appeared well, and at times even elegantly dressed, at dinner. I constantly found myself looking and thinking of the one or the other. I have given my opinion of the parents of Matilde—I can only say, she was far too handsome to be

a governess, and too clever, I will say too well educated, to be the wife of a man who was not her superior. While poor Clarisse was too plain to be a governess, and also too well informed to be the wife of an inferior. Nevertheless, I found both, the one as the other, very agreeable companions.

Dinner over, a cup of excellent coffee was produced, and I was soon instructed as to the merits of a chasse. The Chevalier then disappeared, save on rare occasions. Madame, during the hot weather, either took a siesta or assisted in putting away the stew-pans—I never inquired which—and I was left to the tender mercies of the young ladies. At the termination of this my first day's dinner with the family, I expressed my intention of calling on the Abbé, as I had promised, and suggested that the company of the sisters would be most agreeable to me: at all events, you promised to shew me the way, I said, turning to Matilde—Clarisse must come also; I want to see the city, as well as the Abbé. Clarisse, however, was engaged, or Matilde intended she should be so, and we started

alone. The Abbé was at home, and that home was in the immediate neighbourhood of a handsome cathedral, of which he was a dignitary. I forgot at the moment that I entered it, however, that the stalls connected with continental cathedrals were not precisely golden or even silver ones—instead of being ushered into a handsome apartment by a well-dressed servant, and beholding the Abbé in a silk apron, as I had been accustomed when visiting the dignitaries of G——, I beheld the little Abbé himself opening the door; and, having ushered us into a small apartment, but indifferently furnished, which apparently looked into the garden of a sort of nunnery, he took both my hands again and welcomed me to his simple abode—and then, having saluted Matilde, he added, “My home is rarely honoured by the presence of fair ladies; Freddy is a very lucky boy, how like he is to my dear pupil, Gussy.”

“Indeed, Mons. l’Abbé, is he like his sister,” said Matilde. “Yes, very like, and she is a very pretty girl, I assure you, and

she loves her old Abbé, at least so she told me, very much." He then produced from a side cupboard some delicious fruit, begging we would excuse his apparent want of hospitality, but that French Abbés were not in the position of an English Prebend, nor paid so well—moreover, his order was one of rigour and simplicity; indeed, it occurred to me, as far as I could judge from outward appearances, that his change, from that of an emigrant to his hermitage at A—, was rather for the worse; but he judged otherwise, and who had a right to gainsay him. I solicited his aid in the recommendation of masters, and promised to visit him, and thus we parted to stroll around the ramparts, and look at the various shops, which I confess were far more worthy of notice than the streets, which like those of most other French towns, were dirty and disagreeable. During this perambulation I remarked that my fair companion seemed rather pleased than otherwise at the notice I received as a stranger, and which she appeared to receive from her beauty; but I could not induce

her to take my arm, though I assured her it was a mere matter of form in England, but which in France I inferred from her explanation was a mark of tenderness she had not then vouchsafed me.

Thus time rolled on. I made rapid progress in the French language, that is, as far as regards the speaking of it. How could I do otherwise, with such companions? none of whom, save Matilde, appeared in the least desirous to learn English. I had masters of all kinds; indeed, my mornings were passed in learning to fence, dance, and speak foreign tongues; my afternoons and evenings in visiting the neighbourhood of A——;—by no means one of great interest—and flirting with the girls, both the one and the other as opportunity offered; for although I had then distinctly formed an opinion as to which was the handsomest, I had by no means done so in regard to which of the two I liked best. To do them justice, there was little to choose, they were both so kind. The Chevalier interfered little with our proceedings, and Madame had

enough to do with her household affairs. About this time I received a letter from dear Brooklands; I shall give it here, in order not to break the thread of my story. It ran thus:—

“DARLING FRED,—We were amused at the full account you gave us of your journey to France, and delighted to hear that you are well and so pleasantly placed. How I should like to bring old Nadir and join you, were it not for the presence of that insufferable Chevalier. I cannot conceive a man acting as he does; what very dirty tricks at dinner, too.

“Your description of the young ladies is more agreeable. Pray tell me, dear Fred, which you like best. I am rather in favour of poor Clarisse; Matilde appears to me to be the handsomest, but to have less character and heart; Nelly thinks with me. I see much of her now you are gone, and read all your letters to her. She is greatly improved; a more graceful person and speaking countenance I rarely beheld; not that I imagine she is generally admired.

“By-the-bye, I had almost forgotten to tell you that your friend Mr. Temple is going to A——. His father hearing you were there, wrote to Dad, and it is settled that he is to go; but not to the house you are in. Mama says it would be a pity for you both, as you would be always together speaking English instead of French, and perhaps quarrelling about the girls; she thought you were quite safe with two to make love to daily. What does she mean, Fred? Perhaps you will hear from Mr. Temple. The trout are scarce this season; but we have had some good sport. How I miss you in my rides—Nelly almost always accompanies me—as Arty, who goes to C—— Church after the long vacation, is not at home. What can you do without a horse. All the stud are thriving, and the pets. Love from Mama and Dad. Mind you send or bring me some French gloves and shoes.

“Your ever affectionate

“Gussy.”

Having read this letter, my thoughts flew

back to Brooklands, and those of my home, both as regards bipeds and quadrupeds. Two sentences in the letter more particularly caused me to become more than usually thoughtful. The one was that of Nelly not being generally admired; the other, how could I have existed without a horse for a month.

"Your news from England is not satisfactory, I fear," said Matilde, who was attempting to engage my attention by making Nap sit up on his hind legs with a stick between the fore ones.

"Quite so; pray read it, if you understand English sufficiently; you will then be enabled to judge. But I have been thinking if a tolerable horse could be obtained in La Belle France. I have not as yet seen an animal in this ancient city which could jump over a wheel-barrow, much less the wide brooks about here."

"Well, Monsieur Fred, I confess that I know little of horses, still less of jumping brooks. But I will ask Papa to invite Monsieur Chevreul to supper, and you can



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talk the matter over with him. But, pray tell me something of Nelly, and your sister Gussy, I think you call her."

"Yes, Gussy we call her; let me hear you pronounce it in French. You cannot; yet if you could it would not sound so musical as does it from English lips. You ask me to tell you something of her, as of Nelly. Well, they are both charming in their way; the one the most joyous being I know; the other the most feminine; not that my precious sister, is not equally the most gentle of her sex. But there are some, who are given at times to mistake a light heart for a giddy one. I love them both in their different ways, the one as the sister of my home, the other as the sister of my heart."

"Very good," said Matilde, "then you are already in love with this Miss Nelly."

"Not precisely that, ten years hence I may the better be enabled to inform you; as yet we have only vowed eternal friendship."

Here she interrupted me by exclaim-

ing, "Well, that is much between man and woman."

"Rather say in this instance, boy and girl, indeed had you allowed me, I should have added, eternal friendship in 'the School-room.' But hark, the bell rings somewhat loudly, whom do you expect so late; any visitors?"

"None at this time in the evening; it is getting dark I fancy, possibly mon Pere has already summoned Monsieur Chevreul to discuss your sporting tastes."

But at this moment the door opened, and the next I was almost in the arms of poor Selwyn, who entered the room followed by a tall youth, whom I may as well introduce as my schoolfellow and friend, Temple, we shook each other cordially by the hands, while Matilde blushing and curtesying, backed herself very gracefully out of the room.

Never was a man more changed in appearance than was my poor friend Selwyn; he appeared literally to have grown twenty years older; and the joyous smile which once lighted up his animated countenance was

gone for ever. "I am once more returning to old England, Fred," he observed, "dear Gussy, almost the only correspondent I have now in the world, informed me of your being here, so I have remained for the night in order that I may tell them at home, what you are doing here in the city of A—. Strange that as I descended from the diligence from Paris, I met with our young friend Temple, and we determined at once to beat up your quarters, as I wish you, Fred, to come and breakfast with me ere I leave to-morrow."

"And most joyfully will I come," I replied, still holding Selwyn's hand—in fact, the sight of him seemed to transport me, as if by magic, to the Lodge; Anderson, and even poor Mary Hoofcut, were again before me. And turning to Temple, I said, "I knew you were coming, and right glad am I to see you—but I had no idea that you would appear so soon, after the letter which informed me that I might expect you. Where do you put up?"

"For the night, at the hotel, with Selwyn; but to-morrow I become a resident under

the roof of Monsieur Frosac. However, I have not heard that there are any Miss Frosacs; whereas, you appear already to have established an agreeable flirtation, if I may judge by the girl who vanished on our arrival."

"There are two," I observed, "and I am quite prepared to toss you up for choice—so you see, I have not made any great havoc as yet; however, you shall see them both by daylight to-morrow, when we can settle matters amicably."

"Agreed," replied Temple; "I see you are as generous as ever in regard to all girls, save your sister's playmate, Nelly."

"Recollect, I have known her from childhood, loved her in boyhood, and possibly shall idolize her in manhood—but as yet I have not made up my mind. In the meantime, Selwyn, I have offered you no refreshments—true, I am not under my own roof, but I pay well, and the Chevalier is generous, so I can take the liberty of urging you to remain to supper; the family are kind and agreeable."

"No, no, Fred," replied Selwyn, "I dined well *en route*--I must breakfast early; so now, Fred, good-night, both Temple and I are tired with our journey."

Having satisfied the two young ladies, that my friends were persons of very considerable importance: the one an actual English landed proprietor, the other the younger son of a real milord; at which information Matilde appeared well satisfied; I also bid them an early good-night, and retired to my alcove, in order that I might be up with the lark, in order to obtain as much time with Selwyn as possible. I was, in fact, in his bed-room, at the hotel, ere he was dressed; and he then informed me it was his intention to let the Lodge, and to return to France, possibly go on to Italy—"If so, we shall meet again, Fred." It is impossible to say how much this determination on his part pained me; I well knew a roving life would ill-suit him—in fact, his health was already so much impaired, I scarcely fancied he would ever live to return. Temple soon joined us; and, breakfast being over, we bid farewell to poor

Selwyn, who started for England. For many hours subsequently my heart sank within me ; and, notwithstanding the apparent delight which Temple evinced at our meeting, as the knowledge that we might be some months together, it was several days ere I recovered my usual hilarity. However, the spirits of youth are elastic—we had been firm friends at Eton, as at Brooklands, where he frequently passed his holidays ; moreover, all our tastes were similar, save the taste of acquiring foreign languages. And, although he did manage to make himself understood, after a residence of several months in France, he declared to me, that it was utterly impossible he could ever positively speak anything but pure English ; in fact, the conversations which he held with Madame Quequovillier, as also with the Chevalier, during the evenings that he formed one of our circle, which was constantly, were a continual source of amusement.

I shall give one instance of his attempt to hold a conversation on the subject of Monsieur Chevreul, who had been invited and

whom we expected to supper. The table was prepared, and Madame having given orders, that all things should be provided for the Chasseur's entertainment, was reclining in a fauteuil. Matilde and Clarisse being dressed, frisée and chausée, with more than usual care—whether these little attentions were for the grand Chasseur or Mr. Temple or myself, I cannot say, but there we sat a pleasant party as Temple entered, and with the hearty and natural bearing of a thorough gentleman, which he was, saluted the whole of us, more particularly Matilde, whom he greatly admired even to causing me jealousy; as least such jealousy, as the less fervent admiration on my part could create.

“Glad to see you, Madame,” said he in English, warmly pressing her somewhat dumpy hand. “Ah! I forget, confound this French. Fred, pray speak for me. Dont laugh, young ladies. Très bien aise, de vous voir, Madame. Will that do, Fred?” turning to me, and then having seated himself between the girls, he commenced again.

“Touching this Monsieur Chevreul le

Grand Nimrod de la France, is he coming to supper? for to tell you the truth, Je suis accablé, for the want of some potato salad. You speak English, ma chere Miss Matilde, and will therefore understand me. I have been learning what accablé means all the morning, and I have come to the conclusion, that being translated it is famished, positively broken down for the want of something to eat; for I have not dined, feeling assured, that your female chef would give us something appetisant to-night."

Matilde who understood the better part of this explanation, joined me in a hearty laugh, and of course the others laughed also, because we laughed, and this satisfied Temple who was as good tempered as was he a kind-hearted and clever fellow. But in the midst of our hilarity the door opened, and the Chevalier entered, with his sporting friend Chevreul.

Now, when it is recollected that I had been all my life accustomed, in the hunting field, to such men as my own admirable Dad, Selwyn, the Harewoods, and even the kind-hearted yeomen Barleycorn and Ploughshare; and that my friend Temple,

was the son of an English Peer, who possessed one of the first studs in England, and moreover had been initiated from his very childhood, in all the delights of first-rate sporting. I say, considering such to have been the case, it was by no means extraordinary after the laudations we had listened to from every member of the Quequovillier family in reference to Chevreul's extraordinary sporting propensities, to say nothing of his admirable horsemanship and knowledge of all matters connected with the sports of the field, that we should have formed a very high estimate of his character, and no mean one of his personal appearance. Conceive then my astonishment on beholding a little mean-looking middle-aged person, dressed in the most absurd costume it is possible to conceive that any man could disfigure himself in, to appear before civilized beings, much less females at a supper table. Having been duly introduced, I cast a glance at Temple; it was enough; he went into fits of laughter, which however he cleverly turned off by declaring that the very idea of

beholding Monsieur Chevreul, who he had been informed was a first-rate sportsman, had put him in mind of an admirable sporting tale he had that day read in Galignani; this naturally caused me to laugh, but I explained matters by declaring that Temple had expressed his utter inability to hold a conversation on sporting matters in French. Matilde holding up her finger all the time to entreat us to behave, and so matters righted. But let me, if I possibly can, sketch Monsieur Chevreul; poor dear man, I have to thank him for many days amusement; and after all had it not been for his insufferable conceit, and thorough belief that he had some idea of sporting and could ride, I could have liked him better. Having made many polite bows, and still more polite speeches, which Temple did not understand, and I did not believe, he approached the girls, and while he speaks to them, I will sketch him. In height he was about five feet six; thin, ill formed, with a face very much resembling the knave of diamonds, and much marked with the small pox, so much so,

indeed, as to destroy what otherwise, his features being good, would have caused him to have had rather an intelligent countenance ; this however was no fault of his ; not so, however his costume, which was truly absurd, possibly the more so, from a fancied idea on his part, that he was the perfect beau ideal of a sportsman ; if so, his astonishment must have been great as having been asked to meet two young Englishmen, who had expressed their strong admiration for the chase, on finding them most simply attired in sober black. However, I give the portrait as he stood before the chair on which Matilde negligently if not gracefully reclined ; his coat a sort of shooting jacket, in the capacious side pockets of which both his hands were placed, was made of a species of green plush cut off at the sides, and buttoned close up to the throat, the metal buttons on which, and there were many, each having a separate device, on one of which appeared a pointer, on another a partridge, a hare, and so forth ; his cap or casquet, which he had laid on a chair, had an immense peak ; around his

throat was tied a white handkerchief, sufficiently tight to strangle any one less given to leanness, while his nether garments were composed of a texture impossible to describe, either as to make or what they were made of, but somewhat close fitting around his small legs, and terminated by a well cut pair of gaiters; in such attire stood Monsieur Chevreul, a bachelor, in easy circumstances—that is as the French have it—he had six milles livre de rent, the principal part of which he expended on powder and shot—which he wasted.

But supper is served, and we sat around the well supplied board, in most amusing conversation and considerable laughter, greatly increased by Temple's vain efforts to make himself understood by Madame, and at the same time to act with propriety towards the invited guest. Any attempt, however, to give in reasonable language all that passed, would be in vain. What I have to say, therefore, I must say briefly in plain English. Supper over, at which of course, sportsmanlike, both Temple and Chevreul,

played a very good knife and fork ; the former, because he was really hungry, and the latter, that he looked on it as a positive feast of St. Hubert.

The Chevalier nothing loth, though quite unusual, proposed that we should have some punch à l'Anglais. To this the ladies readily assented, and Monsieur Chevreul having appealed to Temple to know if it was the usual beverage of the English—declared his anxiety to taste it. Indeed, he thus expressed himself—"In England I read that sportsmen take punch at breakfast in their tea before starting for the chase—cold punch out of little flasks in the field, when they catch the fox—punch in the evening, or after dinner, when they come home fatigued—and punch when they go to bed, to make them sleep—this they term a night-cap. Is it true, Monsieur Temple?"

"I cannot precisely contradict you, Sir," he replied, "but your informer has a little exaggerated the quantity ; moreover, I fancy the evil exists with the minority, rather than the majority of sportsmen. But we have a great variety of Punches in Eng-

land. Those I best prefer, are what we term, 'Blue-ruin,' and a highly flavoured 'Punch,' concocted in the Strand, which even the young ladies of England greatly enjoy."

"Ah, Mon cher Monsieur Vestern," exclaimed Chevreul in an ecstasy. "I shall beg your goodness to give me the receipt; 'blue-ruin, blue-ruin!' I never heard of that punch before."

"It can scarcely be called punch," I replied, "nevertheless it is about the most wholesome, and by no means the worst of exciting drinks; composed of gin, hot-water and sugar, according to taste. You possibly do not exactly know what gin means, and I can scarcely explain it in French; but if you will sup with us some night at the hotel, we will do our best to introduce you to a bottle of 'Blue-ruin.'"

"That will we with great pleasure," observed Temple, "and I feel certain that Monsieur Chevreul will pronounce it to be excellent."

"A thousand thanks, gentlemen, for your politeness, I shall be most happy to accept

your invitation ; but gin, gin, let me see, the author I have been reading, speaks of gins ; that is, traps used by poachers for snaring hares, but I do not recollect his having called it ‘ blue-ruin ;’ but wait, I see the trap must be baited with something steeped in gin—is it so ?”

“ Not precisely that,” I replied — “ the gin you describe and the blue-ruin gin, are not exactly the same, though your remarks are reasonable—for there is considerable ruin in both.”

The punch was brought in, and was certainly very good, concocted by Madame—a sort of highly flavoured rum punch ; we drank freely as Englishmen, but not unwisely. And the little eyes of Chevreul soon began to twinkle brightly ; he longed to hear something of England and its field-sports, and notwithstanding the presence of the girls, who appeared highly amused, as he had been invited expressly to speak of horses and hounds, partridges and woodcocks—in almost unexplainable tongues we launched fearlessly into the thick of sporting

matters. However, it was all but impracticable to Chevreul—he did nothing but hold up his hands, then thrust them into his pockets, then take a little more punch. The idea that any one man living would keep such sporting establishments as those of the Duke of Gloucestershire or Lord Fitz; the number of hounds in their kennels, the number of horses in their stables, was all to him a positive romance—scarcely less so, to the remainder of the party. Again, when we spoke to a man, who having waded the whole day through the marshes to kill a couple of jack-snipes, or over ten miles of ground to bag a leash of red-legged partridges, or an old hare—and yet considered himself the very Nimrod of the city—of a hundred hares, and fifty brace of pheasants falling to two guns after luncheon, I really fancied he would have embraced his fat and amiable hostess in the presence of her lord and master, the Chevalier, out of pure excitement, or have swooned on the floor: an excitement so greatly increased by the punch, that I thought it due time to enter into the

subject of horses—ere he was fairly hors de combat.

“Speaking of horses, Monsieur Chevreul ;” we had just been describing as far as practicable a Meltonian stud ; “speaking of horses, my friend Temple and I are desirous of procuring a hack each ; something low-priced and sound, just to take an occasional gallop in the neighbourhood, in order to keep up our horsemanship ; probably you can inform us where such may be purchased.”

“That can I,” he replied—“there is one, Monsieur Sanglier, who lives in the Rue des Maturins, a dealer in horses ; he has two or three Norman hacknies, which I fancy might suit you. But, gentlemen, if you will honour me with your company at breakfast to-morrow morning, I shall be happy to take you to Sanglier’s stable, where you can judge for yourselves. This punch is very excellent, Mademoiselle,” he continued, turning to Clarisse, on whom his eyes had been fixed for the last ten minutes—as if he had discovered something more than usually pleasing in a countenance marked like his

own, poor girl—"but what is apparently water to an English sportsman, is pure rum to a French one—so I must bid you all good-night. Gentlemen," he added, extending his hands to us both, "I shall hope for the pleasure of your company at ten to-morrow ;" and with this he left us.

The Chevalier proposed one more glass. Temple drew his chair nearer to Matilde, which caused me to feel that he was appropriating my rights, and I almost regretted there was no charming Miss Frosac on whom to retaliate. We had, I fear, a good laugh at Chevreul's expense, and then parted for the night, most reluctantly on the part of Temple, who constantly proposed to Madame that he should come, bag and baggage, to the Rue des Cocques.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE ten on the following morning, I had called for Temple, and we proceeded together to the Hotel where Chevreul had kindly invited us to breakfast. We found him anxiously awaiting our arrival, and he received us most kindly, adding, however, that the punch Anglais had disturbed his rest, and that he had been awake all night, thinking of the wonderful sport we must have in England, and then, with a deep sigh, expressed his regret that he was not a millionaire, or he should instantly visit La belle Gloucestershire.

“You would do well,” I replied, “for be

assured there is no country like it for a rich man, and it has many advantages for a poor one, over all others I know of. But you must come and pay us a visit, and judge for yourself."

"I should, indeed, be enchanted," he observed, taking both my hands, "but come, breakfast awaits us." The costume of Chevreul was almost precisely similar to that in which he had appeared on the previous evening. Moreover, he was evidently a person well known in the city, and to all appearance respected; whether from his well known sporting tastes, his independence, or his virtues, I cannot say. Enough that the breakfast to which he had kindly invited us was precisely in keeping with his idea of an English sportsman's appetite, and peculiarly so to that of two growing lads. Of punch or blue ruin certainly there was neither, but in their place we had wine and "eau de vie," preferable ere mid-day.

Chevreul took the head of the table, thrust a napkin under his chin, and then suggested oysters as a commencement. The oysters

were followed by cutlets, a savoury omelet, roast fowl, and a variety of other dishes, all well cooked, accompanied by vin de grave, claret, eau de vie, and coffee. This substantial déjeuner à la fourchette over, we proceeded to visit Mons. Sanglier's establishment. As I walked through the streets, I could not help calling to mind the well kept stables of Brooklands, as also those of Selwyn, and many others in old England, so beautifully regulated and admirably clean, not forgetting the wonderful order and arrangements of some of those of our leading dealers, both in the metropolis and the provinces; and I doubt me not but that the mind of Temple was working on similar recollections, though it was scarcely necessary he should have gone one yard in thought beyond the establishment to which from boyhood he had been daily accustomed, which was perfect of its kind. At all events, we both naturally concluded that Monsieur Sanglier had something neat if not grand in the way of a repository. As I, at least, was thus ruminating, Chevreul exclaimed, "Here we are,

gentlemen ;” and we entered that which at first appeared to me to be a sort of cow-yard, with a small house standing in one corner. Chevreul rang at the bell, and the illustrious Sanglier immediately stood before us in all the pride of an unshaved chin, and a portly, unclean, ill-dressed person—far more like a cow doctor than a horse dealer. In fact, there was nothing about the man, in the eyes of an Englishman, at least, giving evidence of his calling ; however, we sought the animal horse and not the animal man.

“ Good morning, Sanglier,” said Chevreul, touching the peak of his cap, on which Sanglier raised his hat ; “ here are two English gentlemen who are desirous to see your stud—moreover, they will probably purchase, if they find anything to suit them.”

“ Delighted to shew the gentlemen what I have,” he replied ; “ luckily a few horses arrived yesterday, from Normandy—they may find something fit for a prince.”

The stable-door was thrown aside, as, having crossed the dirty yard, he uttered the last word ; and an air so foul issued

therefrom, that it almost made my eyes water—how horses could have existed in such a den, I know not; all I say is, that we should have been stifled, had we remained therein. “Only conceive poor Anderson beholding twenty horses,” for there were at least that number in the stable, “in such a pigstye,” said Temple, aside; “pray beg this big Sanglier to trot some of them out, if so he has any that can trot.”

Having, as far as possible, explained to Chevreul the sort of animals we desired to purchase, several were produced, some with long tails, and large heads, and unsound legs—some with small heads and short tails; in fact, it is vain to endeavour any description of Sanglier’s stud, save that there appeared to be all sorts and sizes, but of a race and breed so utterly distinct from that to which we had been accustomed, that the little knowledge we then had of the best points of a horse, was lost in a maze of irresistible wonder and laughter, to the evident discomfort of poor Chevreul, whose sporting knowledge and horsemanship, as his know-

ledge of a horse, was evidently formed on a very low estimate. However, we had given much trouble, and were both desirous to obtain something to ride; so, at length, after much bargaining, I became the proprietor of an iron-grey gelding, about fourteen two, with a splendid tail and an ugly head, quite out of condition, but sound, and given to rear more than was agreeable; but I fancied I was a sufficiently good horseman to cure him of this vice; be it as it may, he did not give me time, inasmuch as he took the initiative, as I shall in the sequel shew, and cured himself, at the risk of my life; for this hack I paid three hundred and fifty francs, his full value; and, as Sanglier pronounced it, an "Amour," that is a love of a horse, I christened him on the spot, "Wild boar," after the vender, Sanglier.

Temple was rather more fortunate, he selected a little rusty bay Norman mare, for which he paid five hundred francs—far too much; she had a dock tail, and a wicked eye. Chevreul said, he had seen Sanglier on her back, and she was the neatest goer

in all France ; I wonder he did not add all Europe. To conclude the bargain, Sanglier proposed we should take a "petit verre," which we did, of vile brandy ; and, having hob-nobbed, that is, touched each other's glasses, and paid our money, to the great satisfaction of their recent owner, Temple observed, that he should name his mare, Matilde—had it been a horse, Chevreul's name would have been selected.

Our next step was to procure saddlery ; for this purpose our obliging friend took us to a saddler, whom he pronounced to be a first-rate hand in his art ; but we found it far more difficult to obtain decent saddlery than we had tolerable hackneys ; however, these matters are, I fancy, greatly improved during the last twenty years with our friends on the other side of the Channel. And then, by the advice of the little Frenchman, having selected a fitting stable for our new purchases, we proceeded to the Quequovilliers, who were greatly amused at the account we gave of our morning's proceedings, and apparently not a little proud of our having

become possessed of two such fine animals. "I have already christened mine, Matilde," observed Temple, seating himself, as he always did, close to that young lady, and very often effacing all the impressions I had made during his absence. "And I should have called mine, Clarisse," I observed, "but that it is a horse; so I have named him, Sanglier." "You are very kind," she replied; "I accept the compliment." Her sister, meantime, appeared nothing loath to accept the same from the son of the milord, as she always termed Temple. But whenever I thought of Nelly, all my jealousy vanished in a moment.

The afternoon subsequent to our having dealt in horseflesh being fine, I suggested we should take a ride, the better to be enabled to judge of the horses' qualities as soon as possible. To this Temple having agreed, they were ordered at four o'clock, and he promised to attend, in order that we might mount them in the presence of Madame (as we always termed Madame Quequovillier) and the young ladies, who were very anxious

to see the horses. At the time appointed they were led saddled into the port-cocher, and their appearance was unquestionably improved even by one day's absence from the foul air of Sanglier's stable, in addition to a little trimming. Moreover, the new equipments set them off to advantage, and the young ladies were actually—as French girls are not seldom—"enchanted," whether it was, however, with the flowing tail of the "Wild Boar," or the wicked eye of "Matilde," I cannot vouch. I regretted Chevreul's absence, the more that he would have had a lesson in horsemanship which I certainly never forgot. Matilde being quiet enough, Temple was soon mounted; when I approached the "Wild Boar," however, he was by no means inclined to allow me to vault, as I had intended, lightly into the saddle, to shew my activity to the lookers on, for he reared again and again; however, I had no intention to give in, and at last, what with coaxing and speaking to the animal—for I have always held the opinion there is nothing like gentleness with horses—I managed to

seat myself fairly in the saddle, and we prepared to start; the moment, however, I pressed my heels against the "Boar," and slackened my reins, up went his fore legs higher and higher. At first he battled with the air, then plunged, then reared again, at last so perpendicularly that I had no alternative but that of slipping over his haunches; and thus I saved my life. As I did so, however, I possibly held too tightly by the reins, for the animal lost his balance, and with a fearful crash fell backwards, his head passing literally through the low window of the saloon, shivering alike glass and framework, crushing a portion of the stone work, and then rolling himself on the ground, he lay there trembling. While the shrieks of the assembled females caused no end of heads to be popped out of the neighbouring windows, and the passers by rushed in to pick up the slain, grimacing and lifting their shoulders as had the lofty tower of the cathedral fallen on the surrounding streets. In fact, I believe the only two of the party who took the matter coolly were those who

had most reason to feel otherwise; I, who had so nearly been a cripple for life, if not worse, and Temple, who sat calmly on his little Norman mare, vainly endeavouring to stifle a fit of laughter, which, when he found I was unhurt, burst forth most boisterously.

“On my word, Fred, you managed famously. I fully expected to have seen you fly through the window. Thank God you are not hurt; but pray pick up the bits, I should rather say the wounded. I hope the Wild Boar is not injured, as I am bent on a ride.”

My astonishment being over, for at the moment I scarcely knew the extent of the danger I had escaped, I satisfied the company that all was right, shook the Wild Boar, who regained his legs, apparently little hurt, though much frightened, and doubtless with a terrible headache, as he rose up on his legs again, shook himself, and could he have spoken, surely would have admitted he had the worst of it. Finding him none the worse, much to the astonishment of the Chevalier, who had arrived in the midst of

the confusion, I remounted, and strange to say, the animal walked quietly out of the court, and from that hour till the day of my leaving France he never attempted to rear again. Having ridden our horses beyond the city gate, we tried their paces, and found that although we had not exactly become the possessors of hunters, we nevertheless had two very tolerable little hacks, which hacks in due time we managed so far to instruct as to enable them to surmount some tolerable fences, much to the annoyance of the French farmers, who could not understand our great enjoyment, and felt very much disposed to resent our intrusion. And thus our days passed merrily and agreeably ; in fact, the sunshine of life was truly that period of my existence.

Temple did his very utmost to induce Matilde to ride his little bay mare, but riding was not one of her accomplishments ; indeed, she had no taste for that agreeable exercise ; even Clarisse, though more inclined, whether from a sort of rivalry or a real desire to learn, was never actually induced

to try, notwithstanding Temple's offer to send to England for a side-saddle, or even for a habit. And I fancy this refusal very greatly diminished my admiration of them both, notwithstanding the handsome face of the one, and the very kind and pleasing manners of the other; for all that, the sisters were utterly unlike dear Gussy and Nelly, who were to me perfection. And thus the long days of summer past, and early winter approached. At times we visited the good old Abbé—indeed, I did not fail to call on him whenever I had letters from dear Brooklands; we went, also, occasionally into French society, that is, the society of a few of the best families in the city; but our evenings were generally passed with the Quequovillier family, with whom we became great favourites. While Chevreul, in whom we really found very amiable qualities, constantly joined us in the evening, and on such occasions, we always had some very amusing sporting conversation, invariably finishing up the night with some "ruin de blue," as Chevreul termed it, though concocted of

brandy and water. And I always fancied, after he had imbibed his first tumbler, and that his little eyes began to twinkle and settle on Clarisse, that he had a great fancy for her; whether this fancy was justified by future events, I cannot say—he certainly made no proposal while we were there. As the shooting season advanced, he became all excitement—and a week before the time, that the Chasse opened, as he termed it, he appeared to do nothing but clean and re-clean his gun, and arrange his powder and shot; to do him justice, however, he was by no means selfish in his amusement; for having secured the right of shooting within a few miles of the town, he was never happy if either Temple or I, or both, were not his companions. As regards myself, I never professed to have that passion for shooting which I had for hounds and horses; not that I did not enjoy a good day's shooting, more particularly if I shot over good dogs. But, alas! poor Chevreul's kennel was of the most humble description, consisting of one very inferior pointer, which

he called Murat, and an English setter, his companion in badness. And as he was a miserable shot, and neither of us were much better, the amount of game we bagged in a country unpreserved, was certainly not very important, and would certainly have disgusted as well as stagnated poor Forster. However, it was a source of considerable amusement, and at times enabled us to add in some trifling degree to Madame Quequovillier's larder. On the approach of Christmas, as indeed during Christmas and the New Year, we had no end to festivities; and although Christmas trees were not then in vogue in France, whatever they might have been in Germany, the amount both Temple and I expended in bon bons—to say nothing of New Year's presents—for the Jour de l'An, as they termed it, was a matter of surprise and delight to both the girls; and when I look back on those really happy days, I own that I find a smile on my lips, and a sort of blush on my face, to think of the very foolish boyish tricks we played to ingratiate ourselves with the sisters. Ma-

tilde, however, I fear always had the best of it—and why? solely that she was the prettiest—though, I confess, in after years I should have selected Clarisse. Thus if I presented a more than usual splendid box of bon bons, Temple never allowed the day to elapse without offering something superior. And although we frequently came to the determination that we would make in future no difference in our gifts between the two sisters, somehow or another, the best prize invariably fell to the lot of the elder; not that either the one or the other had reason to complain, for ere we left, they might, I fancy, have opened a very tolerable shop with our gifts. I must, however, do them the justice to say, there was nothing they valued half so much as the knives and scissors, needles and cotton, I first produced, from England. In fact, Escourt was quite right, and had I any decided inclination to possess myself of the heart of either of those amiable girls, I certainly should have sent to England for a box of cutlery.

If I recollect rightly, it was about the

second week of the month of January, on a fine mild sunshiny morning, that I called on Temple and proposed that we should take a long ride into the country. The day previous, I had received a letter from dear Gussy, giving me an account of a brilliant run which had taken place from one of the Brookland coverts, as also a delightful account of the meet, at which both Nelly and her were the admired of all admirers. I did not precisely like this, and most heartily wished I had been there on Silver-tail or the Jumper ; but this letter made me all in a fever to see hounds again ; and I felt as I mounted the " Wild Boar," and went quickly towards Temple's abode, that I could have ridden a steeple chase—having joined my friend, we trotted gently towards the open country ; ere we had reached the gates, however, conceive our astonishment on beholding a no less person than Chevreul—mounted on a tall raw-boned horse, jogging quickly after us, his usual tight trousers being changed for a pair of indescribable boots, which he termed jockey boots. " Hol-

loa!" cried Temple, "most illustrious Nimrod, where on earth did you pick up that superb Rosinante? In truth, you have selected a tall horse — has he a leg to stand on—in fact, is he one of Sanglier's stud?" While in my utter astonishment, thinking possibly of poor Selwyn and the poor old woman whom he had rescued from the homœopathists, I added, "You have been and done it." "Indeed, has he," said Temple, "or Sanglier has been and done him. But do tell us, Chevreul, where did you get your horse, and whither are you bound—for I was not aware you were a horseman as well as a first-rate shot." "Nor am I," said Chevreul, laughing, "but the fact is, I was anxious to get a few lessons while you remained here, and I fancied I should like to join sometimes in your rides, but more particularly to see you ride over a few fences, one of your English accomplishments. Sanglier tells me this is a steeple chaser, so, hearing you were going to ride, I sent for the horse and followed you." "Bravo! bravo, Chevreul!" we both exclaimed, "we shall hear of your leading the

field at Melton, ere long—but come, we are rejoiced to have your company.” It would be far less difficult to sketch with pencil than pen, the peculiar, almost ludicrous figure of poor Chevreul seated on his tall horse, with the tips of his toes scarcely touching his stirrups. As we rode rapidly forward, I felt every minute the brute would come down on the pavé on which he persisted on riding, instead of selecting the soft sides of the highway, as we did. On arriving at the open country, I persuaded him to take up two or three holes in his stirrup leathers as a commencement of his first lesson in riding, more particularly, as he desired to sauté or jump a fence, as he termed it—ere he could sit firmly on the saddle. However, the little gentleman shewed courage, and kept his seat astonishingly, notwithstanding the high action of the Troubadour, the name he had given the horse—why, I know not, for he was anything but a troubadour, save in grunting. Having turned into some open fields, where there were a few slight fences and some small drains or ditches, over which we

had been accustomed to practise our French nags, the Chevalier's lessons in the equestrian art commenced, and amid shouts of laughter, we got him over one or two places; in fact, the horse really had a far better idea of fencing than either of those on which we were mounted.

“Sanglier says truly,” observed Temple; “the Troubadour can jump, I fancy, better than he can sing—suppose you let me try him.” To this Chevreul willingly consented, and forthwith dismounted; and, under the admirable horsemanship of Temple, he really proved to be a very tolerable animal—how he had become so, or where he had learnt to fence, it would be difficult to say, for a more ill-favoured hackney, in his then condition, I scarcely ever beheld. It was not long, however, ere his qualities were fully put to the test; for, so delighted was Chevreul at his superior performances, and that in the presence of two young Englishmen, that he became at once the purchaser, at a price, however, not exceeding one half of that we had given for our hacks.

"Well," said Clarisse, one evening, addressing Chevreul, as we sat around the supper-table, after a day's shooting, when the game had been presented to Madame, "you are really much changed, of late; Monsieur Fred assures me you will soon be a first-rate horseman."

"Undoubtedly," I replied; "when he visits us in England, he will number among those of his countrymen who can ride well to hounds—even now he takes his fences as had he been a fox-hunter all his life."

"That does he," added Temple; "and I do not see why we should not have a steeple-chase. What say you, Matilde, will you come and see it?"

"It would be delightful," she replied; indeed, both the girls seemed to look on such an event with no little pleasure.

"And what says Fred Western, and Chevreul," continued Temple.

"For myself," I replied, "the weather is fine and open, so the sooner the race comes off the better. We may have frost, so I suggest we all three enter our horses, let,"

I exclaimed, while he laughed loudly, "the run be for a mile or two. The losers to pay fifty francs each; and two dozen pair of ladies' gloves to the winner, to be disposed of as he may judge fit."

"An excellent arrangement," said Temple. "Come, Chevreul, enter the Troubadour at once, he is sure to win, if you ride him straight, and put the spurs in at the proper time—he can over-pace both the Sanglier and Matilde, that is certain; I say it is your fault, if you do not pocket the francs, and dispose of the gloves, aye, Clarisse."

"I think Monsieur Chevreul has a very good chance," she replied—"and his victory will be great, if he beat two such sportsmen as Monsieur Temple and Fred."

This settled the matter; Chevreul finished his glass, and declared, he would do or die. In fact, when the Chevalier returned home, which he did, from his Club or Caffè, about ten o'clock each night, and found the whole matter was decided, and the day fixed for the following week, I thought he would have jolted his head off with his shoulders—as

he exclaimed, "What, Chevreul a jockey—
ma fois, ensuite il deviendra, un veritable
milord."

But our little friend was nothing daunted ;
and, when he quitted us, with Temple, that
night, it was fully arranged that we should
at once put our horses in training.

CHAPTER IV.

THE first thing we did on the following morning after breakfast was to mount our horses and select a course. This we did without much difficulty, within a league of the city. In fact, we found a mile and a half of ground entirely suited to Chevreul, with the exception of one rather awkward and muddy ditch, into which to fall was to be half buried in muddy water. We thought it probable he might get thus far and no farther; if he did succumb at this ditch, the race would be mine or Temple's, probably mine, as the "Wild Boar" was decidedly the fastest and I the lightest, and we took good care to make the brook safe by a

week's practice, without a word to Chevreul. Again, if the little Frenchman sat tight on approaching the muddy fence, there was no doubt but that the Troubadour would take it, and if so the race was his to a certainty. Thus matters stood till the eventful day arrived, when the sun shone forth brilliantly, and we looked forward to the fun with great delight. As, however, we had determined that the chase should be perfectly private, we agreed not to proceed en force; Madame, Matilde, and Clarisse, with one friend, therefore, went together in a close voiture, carrying with them an excellent cold pie and a bottle of eau de vie. The Chevalier remained at home to look after the wool market. Chevreul and a friend rode together to the ground, and we followed soon after. I may as well say that we had all gone over the course the day previous, and as the land was open, with nothing to preclude a full view of the race, we had only to arrange between ourselves where we were to ride. Chevreul appeared in a new cap, with a somewhat larger front than usual, and his jockey

boots ; in other respects there was no change of dress as regards the riders in that most excitable steeple chase—rather call it a mud ditch chase. Having arrived at the starting field, the ladies alighted, and having placed Madame on a small elevation, and the girls on the driving seat of the voiture, Matilde was instructed to drop a white handkerchief when we were prepared to start ; I may also observe that the starting post was also the winning post, inasmuch as we had arranged to return by the way we went, avoiding the muddy brook on going out. At length the gallant steeds and their riders were placed together, Chevreul in the centre, and away we went on the white cambric falling to the ground. Chevreul took the lead, and absurd as was the whole affair as a steeple chase, the little man rode with undeniable pluck till we approached the fatal brook, when we all closed ; Temple went at it manfully, at a spot well known to us both, and got cleverly over. Chevreul was then about to charge it at the same time as myself, and I must confess he shewed no

disposition to flinch; whether his hand, however, were not so light as his heart, or that the Troubadour slipped, I am not prepared to assert, although I waited an instant to see the result, as did the lookers on, who were not far distant, watching with breathless anxiety, as he faced it resolutely; but the little man, unaccustomed to such jumps, hung apparently on his bridle rein, and sat loosely, possibly spurring his horse only on one side, and the consequence was well nigh fatal, for although the Troubadour succeeded in covering the brook, he slipped backwards from the upper bank, and horse and rider were in an instant immersed over head and ears, as the saying is, in mud and water. No sooner did I witness the accident, than I jumped from the back of the "Wild Boar," shouted to Temple to stop, and rushed towards the unfortunate Chasseur, as did every one else in the field who could rush, save Madame, who, not being in rushing condition, came panting to the brook-side, crying, at the top of her voice, "Ceil' il sera etouffé, ce pauvre

Chevreul, soit dit qu'il se noit pas." Notwithstanding his imminent danger, for, as Madame justly observed, he had but a choice between drowning and suffocation, it was utterly in vain to suppress our laughter—for, although we urged him repeatedly to remain as quietly as possible, or hold on by the bank, he did nothing but flounder and struggle; indeed, I had him by the collar more than once, but he slipped out of my hands again like an eel, and floundered in the mire—his cap, with a great peak, getting over his eyes, in his vain endeavours to extricate himself, in addition to his fear of the Troubadour's legs, who, like his master, was also struggling to release himself. At length, we really began to fear that matters had become serious—therefore, with Temple's assistance, he being the tallest and strongest, I at last had fast hold of the now half-drowned and exhausted Chevreul, and we fairly dragged him on the bank, where, after sundry observations in French, not sufficiently polite to insert in these pages, which, however, being translated, meant, that he

would be a "—— Pope," ere he entered himself to ride another steeple-chase, à l'Anglais, together with sundry splutterings to get rid of the muddy water he had imbibed, we made him toss off a good glass of brandy, when he became comparatively a man again. We then turned our attention to poor Troubadour, who had sunk so deep in the mud, that it was well nigh half-an-hour ere he was fairly on terra firma—and even then he shook like an aspen leaf, his master being in about the same plight; as we could not offer the horse a petit verre, as we had done to Chevreul, we suggested that he should take another, which he did, without reluctance—and, the girls having good-naturedly admitted him, half-drowned and muddy as he was, within the voiture, we sent them home as fast as possible, when Chevreul was at once put to bed, where, poor fellow, slight fever coming on, he remained for ten days. In the meantime, whether from the effects of the brandy he had swallowed, or the immersion, but probably the former, the ladies informed us that

his conduct in the carriage had been most unusual—now he declared, that had the Troubadour not slipped, he should have won in a canter. Then he asserted I had ridden over him, as he was in the act of taking the brook, and that these English boys had formed a conspiracy to drown him; and with this he abused the whole nation, till at last he sank back in the carriage in a half state of excitement and sentiment, declaring that he had fairly won the gloves, which he intended to present to Clarisse, inasmuch as Matilde was too great a flirt; and then, having embraced Madame, whom he termed his bon mama, he subsided into an unnatural state of drowsy fatigue, which terminated, as I have said, with a severe fit of illness. However, we all liked Chevreul in a way, and pitied him accordingly; and thus, during his illness, we paid him every possible attention. Not a day passed but that one or the other of us sat with him for hours—till at length, when he became convalescent, we were enabled to convince him, that had he had a little more practice in horsemanship,

and, consequently, a lighter hand, the Troubadour would not have fallen, while he most decidedly would have been the victor. Moreover, as neither of us could fairly claim the race, the stakes should be withdrawn—we left him, however, to supply the gloves, which he did, very good-humouredly, dividing them equally between the two sisters.

These were sunshiny days in youth's journey through life, few clouds appeared, save those of April, which came and passed as lightly, and fewer real cares; but it is not meant, how wisely, that man should thus journey onwards in joy. And, although I had made rapid progress in the French language, by the constant association with those who spoke little else, notwithstanding our continued frolics, I confess I have often regretted that I did not learn far more, inasmuch as my residence with the amiable Quequovillier family was brought to a close much sooner than I had anticipated.

It was—how well do I recollect it—one evening in the middle of February, that a public ball had taken place at the theatre.

This ball was termed a ball "de bon bons;" all the beau monde of the city and the neighbourhood were there. Temple and I had looked forward to it with very considerable delight, and no mean amount of rivalry; in fact, he had sent to Paris for a splendid waistcoat, which in after years caused us more amusement than admiration, while I, as the term goes, had built a new bottle green coat, which was greatly approved by Madame and her fair daughters, and it would be difficult to say how many five franc pieces we expended on the best bon bons that could be purchased. Both Matilde and Clarisse, as French girls generally are, were really very elegantly and simply dressed—the elder in white satin, and the younger in pink—and if ever Matilde effaced for a moment dear Nelly from my heart, I confess it was on that almost the last night I remained under the roof of the Quequovilliers.

The ball which took place at the theatre was really very brilliant and delightful, and both Temple and I got on very successfully.

It is possible that we were not considered the best dancers in the room, but we were believed to be rich milords, and our lavish donations of bon bons to all the French girls with whom we waltzed, went far in their eyes to prove such fact. Indeed, had it not been that Temple appropriated Matilde during half the night, while a moustached Sabreur endeavoured to occupy the other—there being many officers present, as two cavalry regiments were quartered in the town—I should have passed a most agreeable evening. As I have said, however, the well fitting elegant dress of Matilde caused her to look more charming than usual. And for an hour or two—forgive me, dear Nelly, that your sweet face and charming person were absent from the mind—my eyes were so dazzled by a graceful form, with a still more graceful head on the top of it, attired in white satin. Alas! for youth! how readily does it imagine that the shadow of love is the substance; the pleasures of life the realities.

This charming ball over, however, we returned homewards, having bid good night.

to Temple; and as I sat in the hired carriage, in close approximation to the white satin dress, which ten minutes previously I had watched with feelings I could scarcely define, whirling round the room encircled by the arm of a Chasseur de la Garde, my heart beat quick; and I confess it, I pressed my companion's hand with a press that really at the moment I intended she should return; but then I thought it probable she had also pressed Temple's when he bid her good night, and who knows, possibly the Chasseur's also; be it as it may, Brooklands, Nelly, Gussy, all, for the moment, were forgotten—the white satin dress had been and done it, as poor old Marsden said to Selwyn. And as we drove up to the Quequovillier's door, I had made up my mind to make fierce love to Matilde, at least for the half hour I knew we should coze over the fire, and talk over the ball, ere we retired. But luckily for myself, I know not how far so for Matilde, an unexpected event occurred, which changed the whole tenour of my thoughts, as did it the even current of my life.

On entering the saloon, two letters lay on the table, the one an oblong packet, marked "on his Majesty's service," the other I instantly recognised as from Gussy. I need scarcely observe, on the principle possibly of a boy, who keeps the best bit of his cake to the last, that the official letter was the first opened, and I confess my delight at finding myself appointed to a distinguished Light Cavalry Regiment. The expression, or rather exclamation I made, however, may surprise many, not so, however, if they feel at the moment what I then felt. It was, "How unfortunate."

"Unfortunate. No bad news from home, I hope," said Madame, kindly. "Pray tell us, Monsieur Fred, what is so very unfortunate;" added Matilde, "it is very unpleasant to have so delightful an evening as we have passed terminated by misfortune."

How vain we are! I really at the moment felt reluctant to tell the truth, in the fear that it would cause her intense pain, for it at once flashed across my mind that I should

instantly have to leave her. I might possibly have saved myself the trouble even of such momentary feelings. At all events, I replied precisely as I had felt on the first perusal of my letter, which would have been a source of joy to half the young men in England. "My misfortune is that had I received this letter only a week since, which I might have done had it not been for the detestable French posts—I beg your pardon, ladies—I should have been enabled to appear to-night at the ball in the very handsome uniform of the regiment to which I am appointed."

"Appointed to a regiment," they all exclaimed, that is the female members of the Quequovillier family—the Chevalier having peeped in at the ball to see that his daughters were fully occupied in dancing, and thence returned to his pipe and downy couch. "Appointed to a regiment," said Clarisse, for Matilde sat for a moment in silence—"As what, a Cadet."

"A Cadet—ma chere—what on earth do you fancy—perhaps you imagine we serve

as full pay privates for a year or two ; not a bit of it—I am an officer—a sub-lieutenant as I think you call it, and consequently I must cultivate a pair of moustaches without delay.”

This news, however, really appeared to cast a gloom over the whole party, but a moment before so joyous. Madame at once exclaimed, “ You will leave us ”—and this with so much apparent sincerity of regret, that I am satisfied at the moment no other feeling but that of sorrow to lose me, entered her heart. Matilde appeared silent and thoughtful, while Clarisse seemed in a half-state of wonder that I, Fred Western, who had been a sort of petted English poodle in the house for more than six months, now teasing the whole family by my frolics, now consoling them with all manner of little attentions, then riding steeple-chases, making up supper-parties, and getting into scrapes, should all at once, by the breaking of a large red seal, be converted into an officer of dragoons—but so was it. I had, however, another seal to break, which bore the

word, "Brooklands." Alas, that I can no longer read the word with joy.

I hastily opened this letter, and as I sat silently perusing it, I fancy they were all watching my countenance, in anxious expectation that it also contained some still more marvellous news; possibly, I was selected Prime Minister or Commander-in-Chief, or Emperor of China; either the one or the other would have been equally as possible, in the idea of Madame, as was the fact, of my being a cornet of dragoons, permitted to receive several francs per diem though actually under her roof, flirting with her daughters, and demolishing her ragouts. At all events, her powers of reading the effects of the mind on the human face must have been very trifling, had she not discovered that the contents of this letter were sufficiently varied to cause me both pain and pleasure—not exactly pain, however, say a trifling jealousy, with much pleasure. At all events, it had the effect of most materially weakening my growing admiration for young ladies in white and pink satin ball-dresses;

and ere I laid my head down to rest, that well-remembered night, or rather morning, for it was four A.M. ere I did so, the two girls, my every day companions, had ceased to be quite divinities, remaining only very charming and agreeable daughters of a French Chevalier. And when I joined them very late at breakfast, after re-perusing Gussy's letter, I feel bound to declare that neatly attired as were they both, looking fresh and charming and ready to pour out my coffee, and do all kinds of pleasing little acts of attention, which young ladies so well know how to perform when in that graceful position, the head of a breakfast table, they appeared to me, as angels I admit, but divested of the wings which on the previous evening I had well nigh been flown away with. But, let Gussy speak for herself—what she says will better explain than I can, why so sudden a change had taken place, both as regards my feelings and wishes; but yesterday I had some strange ideas of requesting Matilde to be off at once to Gretna Green or Paris—little cared I where—so

that her elegant form, "always in white satin, recollect," was my companion. To-day I had serious thoughts of starting at once and alone—so intense was my desire once more to behold dear Nelly, and all so dear at the Old Hall, ere the hunting season was over. And more,—I had in my dreams, which were much confused, almost come to the conclusion that Snareall was none other than the Tempter, in the costume of an attorney-at-law, and it would be necessary, now that I was actually an officer, to try my maiden blade on his skull, to see if he really was a living man.

But let us have the letter; you shall—do not be impatient—let me first have one more look on that dear old seal ere I open it. Alas, there is the name beautifully engraved—"Brooklands"—the post mark also, and the postage somewhat heavy. What do the poor not owe to the Administration which passed that law, which has since enabled all the dear Gussys and all the dear Nellys in the kingdom to correspond with their darling Freds—two pages for a penny, and such pages.

“DARLING FRED,—I write to you in a state of pleasurable excitement, very difficult to define; I may, therefore, as well say at once, that old Forster is not the only one who has been ‘stagnated’ by the intelligence of your having been appointed so soon to a dragoon regiment. This was kindly made known to dear Dad, who, this morning, received a charming letter on the subject from the good Duke of Gloucestershire, who ever thinks it a favour conferred on himself to convey pleasure to others;—and the news has been confirmed by the Gazette of last night. Only think, dear Fred, of your actually being an officer; I long to ride over to tell dear Nelly, how delighted she will be—you cannot imagine what a graceful, loveable creature she has become, so greatly admired, and so much liked. I long even to tell Barleycorn and Ploughshare, and, alas! poor Selwyn, but where is he—there was a time when this event would have been a source of real happiness to him. I must go also and pat the horses, and tell them

that you will doubtless be at Brooklands ere the hunting season is over. Nadir appears already aware that some unusual pleasure has taken place, and is now looking at me with his great soft eyes as if he desired to be let into the secret. I feel, in fact, as could I jump on little Quiz, and, with Wasp as a companion, ride over the neighbourhood to proclaim your good fortune. But the dear Wilson tells me to finish my letter first, and be composed—as if I could be composed; moreover, she declares, you will not start instantly for Brooklands, in fact, she hints that your two French Miss Quequovilliers—what an odd name it is—will detain you for ten days or a fortnight. This I do not believe, but Nelly and I have often come to the conclusion, that you would fall in love with the one or the other of them, particularly after having read your letters, in which you so much praise them. Papa says, they will write to you from the Horse Guards, and order you to join your regiment, which is in Ireland, at once—it is almost as far away from us as you are now; but, of

course, you will come first to Brooklands—so do make haste, Fred, that's a dear brother mine.

“Mama begs me to give you her love, she says, she would have preferred your having become a diplomatist, ambassadors are generally so agreeable; and she dreads your wearing those horrid foreign moustaches—but both Nelly and I admire them. Mama also says, you will learn to smoke, and drink that horrid Irish whiskey—I should not be surprised if you do. But we all look forward to your return home; I shall expect to find you quite Frenchified, but I am ever your loving sister,

“GUSSY.”

“P.S.—I forgot to tell you that vulgar man, Snareall, has been here again, and I am sorry to say, he has almost convinced dear Dad of the necessity of railways; moreover, he declares, we must all yield to the advance of civilization, and that if he does not take the thousands now offered for making a mere bridle road through the

lower park, the Parliament, sooner or later, will make him take hundreds. The impudent fellow actually stared at Nelly and I, who were passing out of the library, as he was ushered in; and, turning to Dad, said, in the coolest possible manner, 'Two very nice girls, your daughters, Mr. Brooklands—I beg your pardon—Mr. Western, very nice girls, indeed.' Dear Nelly held up her graceful little head, and said, 'That vulgar railway lawyer dishonours a Brookland carpet by treading on it.' Don't you think she was right, Fred? But I am forgetting after all to send you the enclosed; dear Dad says you may want the sinews of war now you are a soldier. Don't spend it all on bonbons for those Quequovillier girls, but bring Nelly and I some French presents. Arty is at Ch. Church."

That will I, said I to myself, after I had read this truly a girl's letter for the third time—adding, Frenchified, indeed, not a bit of it; even should I arrive at Brooklands by the down mail, and the hounds meet within

ten miles, I will be there, that's certain; Snareall, I don't like that man, or his railway schemes; moreover, our Dad, though a match for all that is honest, upright, and noble-hearted, is no match for a fellow like this. Well, my fate is decided, I am a soldier, instead of an ambassador, as my dear mother would have desired to have me, ready made—so much the better, I shall be enabled to hunt in old England when there's no fighting. And I fancy there is much of the same kind of excitement in both, whereas diplomatists spend half their lives abroad.

Having come to these conclusions, I joined the sisters at breakfast; and, I must do them the justice to say, when they fully understood my position, they expressed sorrow—and I had really vanity enough to feel certain they regretted my intended departure; and I felt only the truth. Had my correspondence arrived a day later, I should possibly have sat half the morning before a blazing wood fire, chatting over the ball, telling Matilde she had been the belle, and enchanted me in white satin—and, when she

was out of the room, I should have paid a similar compliment to Clarisse, as regards the pink; as it was, I felt really a regard for them both; and, while I suggested to Matilde that, as the day was fine, it would give me pleasure if she accompanied me to the Abbé, to whom I was desirous of making known my intentions to leave for England at the close of the week, as also to introduce myself in my new rank, as an officer of dragoons. After which, taking the hand of Clarisse, I made each sister a present of a very pretty ring, which I had intended for Gussy and Nelly, but which the renewed state of my exchequer enabled me thus to dispose of, with the intention of making more valuable purchases for the inmates of the old Hall at home. This little act of kindness, at the moment when their hearts were open, though the rings were not of half so much value as many presents I had previously given, appeared to touch them greatly, and womanly they both burst into tears.

While I was consoling them with the assurance that England was only two days'

journey, that I should never forget their attentions, that we should all meet again, and that I had much pleasure in their acceptance of such trifles, the door opened, and in walked Temple accompanied by Chevreul, to ask after the young ladies' health, and talk over the ball, after which they were desirous we should have a ride. On beholding tears in the eyes of both girls, while I still held the hand of Clarisse, and was actually seated on the cushioned arm of the chair in which Matilde reclined, Temple exclaimed, "Upon my word, you are making hay while the sun shines. I'll tell you what it is, Fred, neither Chevreul or I can stand this much longer. Fair play is a jewel; let us all enter the lists on equal terms; here you are half sitting on the lap of Matilde, and holding on by the hand of Clarisse. Remember the song, 'Tis well to be off with the old love, before you are on with the new.' I shall write to Nelly, that's certain. Ladies, permit me to tell you, he loved this Nelly in long clothes, then in pinafores, and now is about to give her up for flounces. But

holloa ! tears—at this time of the morning ! lovers quarrels ! aye—what's the matter, Clarisse ? nothing of any consequence, I hope ; Fred has not been rude, has he ?”

While little Chevreul, stepping forward, shrugged up his shoulders, and added, “*Qu'est que c'est ma chere, des larmes, des larmes ; that is not well ; smiles are far better ; but what is the matter ?*”

“The matter is simply this, gentlemen, if you will give me time to explain it. His Majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint Frederick Western, Esq., of Brooklands, in the county of Gloucestershire, to be Cornet in the — Regiment of Light Dragoons, by purchase, vice Bobadil, promoted ; and on the strength of such good fortune, the said Fred Western has presented these young ladies with a trifling present, which has caused them to be larmonious.”

“Appointed to a Cavalry Regiment,” said Temple, “are you joking ?”

“Not a bit of it ; look at this,” and I handed to him the letter which I had received from the Horse Guards.

"No mistake here;" he replied, "all I can say is, you are a very lucky fellow. I thought I should have been first in the field; but I forget, you are the son of the Lord of Brooklands, a better man never lived or rode to hounds."

"An officer!" exclaimed Chevreul, in astonishment, "English officers must be young indeed. What shall we do without you?"

"As you did previous to my coming; recollect, also, that you have learnt to ride. Moreover, Chevreul, you have promised to visit me at Brooklands. Come, you shall have a hearty welcome; I will introduce you to the Lord of Brooklands, of whom you have just heard Temple speak so kindly, and he will shew you two of the first packs of hounds in all England, and that is saying much. Moreover, if you desire to see my native county—if you are anxious to behold all the natural beauties of our little island, there is no way in which you can do so more thoroughly than under the aspect of a foxhunter. It is then the well cultivated

land will appear to you most beautiful ; it is then, following along the brook intersected vale, up the steep hill, through the woodlands, parks, and villages, shewing you little gothic churches, ivy covered cottages, and nooks of beauty you never dreamed of, alive with cattle, and with nature's life, you will see England. Believe me, Chevreul, if you really desire to know the beauties of our sea-girt isle, you must see it as a sportsman, not as a tourist. I will introduce you, also, to some of our English beauties, of whom you speak in such admiration when absent from the beauties you have here ; and Gussy and Nelly shall for the time take the place of Clarisse and Matilde. What say you, will you come ?"

" Ah ! indeed, I should be delighted, mon cher," said Chevreul, taking my hand ; " but I fear I am not rich enough to encounter the expenses of your merrie England."

" Well, Chevreul, I shall leave you to settle the matter with Temple, he well knows the way to Brooklands—and I doubt not that he will be happy to see you at his more

lordly home. But come, Matilde, the morning is advancing, you promised to be my companion to the Abbé's—this day I shall monopolize your society; when I am gone, you will have Temple all to yourself, and Clarisse shall take charge of Chevreul."

I shall pass briefly over the week which succeeded my appointment to the army, and that of my leaving a kind French family, with whom I had been domiciled for eight months; enough, that I had written to Gussy, telling her that I hoped to be at dear Brooklands on a certain day, expressing a hope that the hounds would meet near enough during my leave of absence to enable me to have two or three runs on Friar Tuck; in fact, if I speak in the natural and true feelings of a lad, as I then was, I must confess, that since I had received Gussy's letter, my whole heart was at home; Nelly and Nadir, Gussy and Wasp, Forster and Friar Tuck, my beloved Dad, my mother, Miss Wilson, and old Corbeau, were all before me, as had they been on the day of my departure—all in their several ways,

demanding and awakening my affections, and desires to see them once more.

My belongings were packed up, and I had secured innumerable presents, which I trusted would escape the Custom House. My grey horse I had given to Chevreul, who, at first, firmly refused to accept it; but, at length, I persuaded him to keep it, at all events till I returned, if I ever did return, which, at the moment, I fully intended. At the same time, urging him to get rid of the Troubadour, which he faithfully promised he would do.

Even the poodle, Murat, with whom I had formed a firm friendship, though I have rarely mentioned him, was not forgotten. It had been my custom daily to bring him a biscuit, occasionally a macaroon, which he greatly preferred—and so I left a five franc piece in the hands of Clarisse, who faithfully promised it should be duly expended in his behalf.

At length the morning of my departure arrived; I had endeavoured to secure the identical seat in the coupé, by the side of

Chapel, with whom I had travelled from Calais. Temple and Chevreul joined the family at breakfast, in order that they might accompany me to the diligence. I drank my *caffè au lait* with a sort of suffocating feeling, for I was really sad when the moment of leave-taking came. I then embraced Madame, Matilde, and Clarisse tenderly; they all wept profusely, and, I fancy, in all sincerity of heart—and I was gone. Memory, however, will bring back the past, and once more the sobbing words of Matilde are clear to the mind; of course, under such tuition I had become a perfect master of the French language, and ought, therefore, perfectly to have understood her, when, with tearful eyes, she exclaimed, “*Mais vous retournerez quand vous est Majeur ;*” and I replied accordingly, Ah! yes, undoubtedly, long before that time, indeed, I may never be a major. “*Ah! Mon Dieu, mais vous avez, déjà dix sept ans.*” Certainly, well I trust I may be promoted as rapidly as you desire.

Now, this *majeur* meant, when I came of age; and, as thanks to Messrs. Snareall,

Payne, and Co., I never came of age, in a pecuniary point of view, to any thing of very great value; I never have had the pleasure of seeing my kind friends again. I did subsequently hear, however, that Matilde had become as weighty as her good mother, and consoled herself by marrying a physician, and had herself become the mother of two little Medecios. While poor Clarisse contented herself with a traveller in the wool line, who came on a business visit to the Chevalier.

“Temple, adieu! we shall meet again in England ere long; Gussy will be glad to see you, as shall we all at home. Bring Chevreul with you.”

And, while they stood watching the lumbering diligence, which jumbled round the corner as had it jumbled on my entrance to the city eight months previously, I felt for a time somewhat downcast, particularly as we passed the fields where we had been accustomed to teach Chevreul the art of jumping—but the roars of laughter which burst from the sporting conductor, as I



It is not the least of our misfortunes that we are so often misled by our own feelings. We are so much influenced by our passions, that we are often led to do things which we know to be wrong. We are so much influenced by our prejudices, that we are often led to do things which we know to be false. We are so much influenced by our interests, that we are often led to do things which we know to be unjust. We are so much influenced by our fears, that we are often led to do things which we know to be dangerous. We are so much influenced by our hopes, that we are often led to do things which we know to be vain. We are so much influenced by our desires, that we are often led to do things which we know to be sinful. We are so much influenced by our passions, that we are often led to do things which we know to be wrong. We are so much influenced by our prejudices, that we are often led to do things which we know to be false. We are so much influenced by our interests, that we are often led to do things which we know to be unjust. We are so much influenced by our fears, that we are often led to do things which we know to be dangerous. We are so much influenced by our hopes, that we are often led to do things which we know to be vain. We are so much influenced by our desires, that we are often led to do things which we know to be sinful.

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gave him an account of our steeple-chase, and Chevreul's ditch disaster, and other amusing conversation, made the time pass rapidly and cheerfully ; and when I once more arrived at Calais, what with the thought of again beholding all those I so dearly loved at home, together with the idea of finding myself once more on the back of the Friar, with a gallant pack of fox-hounds before me, soon made my heart light again.

Monsieur Dessein once more supplied me with an excellent dinner, and happily the Piedmontese lady was, for all I knew to the contrary, on the other side of the Alps ; at all events, she was not my neighbour ; having therefore with much discretion tested the merits of Monsieur Dessein's artiste, I passed my evening at the theatre, where a very admirable provincial company had assembled. And on rising the following morning, I was rejoiced to hear that the sea was in the best of all possible humours—in fact, it was truly like a sheet of glass. A little more than two hours, therefore, on this occasion, sufficed to land me safely on the

shores on which no foreign foe will ever tread with impunity. For my part I am no alarmist—I should only like to take a pick of all the hunting fields in old England, and form a division of cavalry — would not I charge into the centre of an invading army — rather a vain assertion for a cornet. Well, I will ask Ploughshare what he says about it; for here I am again in dear old England, and the mail of this very night, if I reach London in time, shall take me to the Old Hall at home—such at least was the current of my thoughts.

CHAPTER V.

ONCE more I find myself in mine own home, in my own accustomed bed, in my own room at dear Brooklands—at the Old Hall at home.

True to my wish, I had arrived at 6 A.M. on the morning subsequent to that I had landed at Dover, dismounting from the box of the mail at that very lodge, where a few, only a few years before, I had met dear Gussy on my arrival from Eton—those few years, however, had made the boy a man—at least, I was on the last step of the ladder to manhood, and moreover, an officer. It was scarcely light when I entered the well-

known park, and having been welcomed by the good old dame, who having left her husband in a warm bed, as good wives should do, while she faced the cold air and threw aside the portals to her dear young master, as she termed me. I walked onwards towards the Hall—how my heart beat as I looked on that too well-beloved home—how I watched each window in the hope that some well-known and well-loved face would peep therefrom, adorned in a night-cap, to welcome my approach. But even Gussy had gone to bed the previous night satisfied, notwithstanding the utmost stretch of imagination that I should remain some hours, if not a night in London, and could scarcely reach Brooklands ere nightfall. So, finding none had risen on that clear cold February morning, with nervous hand I pulled the bell of my home. But nervous hands pull strongly—and the sound had scarcely ceased to vibrate through the Hall, ere bars and bolts flew asunder, and the next moment I found two huge paws clinging to my shoulders, while a warm tongue reached my cold cheek,

with a truer welcome than man can ever give. Dear old Nadir—he knew well the hand that was ever ready to caress—the voice which had been known to him from my childhood—even old Hind, the butler, came in but for a meagre share of my salutations, while my old dumb friend claimed so much love.

“I knew it was you, Master Fred, the very moment you touched the bell—I beg your pardon, Captain Fred I should say, now you are an officer. Master said you would sleep in London—but Miss Gussy and I thought otherwise, and we were right—and Bradly went to bed, thinking as Master thought, solely as he declared, that it froze; and the hounds, as you would see by the paper, did not meet within fair distance till Saturday. But you will be welcome to all at home again. But now, Sir, take my advice and turn into your warm bed for an hour or two, and you will rise as fresh as had you never been to foreign parts.”

I took this sensible advice, and ere twenty minutes had elapsed was fast asleep in mine own accustomed bed. I had slept, possibly,

somewhat sounder and longer than even Mr. Hind had reckoned on, notwithstanding my recent long and fatiguing travels—he having very justly counted on my anxiety once more to behold the dear inmates of the Old Hall at home, to say nothing of the stable, kennels, woods, and gardens, and those who numbered among our well-esteemed neighbours of high and low degree—when I was awakened from a dreamy and mystified slumber by the pressure of a pair of beautiful lips on my forehead, as a voice, gentle and feminine, which, in words of fond affection, pronounced my name: “Ah! dear Fred, how glad I am, how glad they all will be, to see you once more at home; eight months have indeed altered your face—you have grown more dark, and you look older, but your heart is not changed, of that I am assured; so come, get up quickly, brother mine, and introduce yourself to the Brookland family. Nelly is coming over to pass a few days at the Hall, and we must enjoy ourselves during the brief time you are permitted to remain with us.”

“Towards you, indeed, my heart is not

changed, dear Gussy—nor to human being or animal belonging to Brooklands,” I replied, now wide awake; “I have slept longer than I intended, but run and make some of your excellent tea, as in other days, and I will be down in a trice; allons ma chere, I only take five minutes to shave, and five to dress.”

“To shave!” said Gussy—“you have no beard, surely, Fred!”

“No, love, decidedly not; but, you see, having none, I must shave for moustaches—they are now part of a light dragoon’s uniform.”

“Ever joking, Fred; but mama is all anxiety to see you, so make haste.”

I shall pass over that happy meeting—those who know the blessing of family union and affection, those who have been accustomed to the joy of being a member of a family where one heart exists between father and mother, brothers and sisters, can truly appreciate the sentiments which exist throughout the circle, overflowing the eyes and creating joy of heart at such meetings, even after

short absence ; to those who know not such happiness, I would say, be wise, and endeavour to learn them. Even the servants of such a house as Brooklands appeared to share all the pleasure of our meetings, as the sorrow of our departings. And why not—the master of the house, as the mistress, is rarely ill-judged by the conduct and affection of those around them, menials though the world may call them.

A late breakfast over ; as, in days of yore, we sallied forth to visit every home-spot endeared to us by memory of the past, as in renewed joy of the present. The sun, which now gained daily strength as the early spring advanced, soon defaced every sign of the morning's frost, and all nature looked bright, brilliant, and cheerful—cheerful as were our young hearts, thus in affectionate communion enjoying most truly the sunshine of life. As Gussy, warmly clad in her plain walking dress, joined me on the portico steps, where I sat, in the genial sun, caressing Nadir, and teasing Wasp, for the first time I looked steadily at her intelligent coun-

tenance—and, sister though she was, in nature as in heart's affection, and therefore claiming possibly more praise, I must confess, although we had only been parted for eight short months, that face which, in childhood as in girlhood, had ever appeared to me to be full of grace and intellect, evinced, as she had now almost arrived at early womanhood, charms which few could look upon without admiration.

“Well, dear Gussy,” I observed, as I took her arm within mine, “if I am grown older and darker, as you say, I may return the compliment—I presume you intend it as such—by adding, that you look more charming than ever; and, as you have spoken in such terms of Nelly, who I am longing to see, why I must do the same by you when I write to my admirable friend, Temple, whom I left in full flirtation with the two Quequovillier girls.”

Gussy blushed, and looked less pleased with the latter part of my communication than had she at the commencement. But I assured her there was little fear in such

flirtations on the other side of the Channel; and, while she laughed heartily at the character of Chevreul, who, I assured her, would visit Brooklands, and be sure to throw himself at her feet, we walked cheerfully forward, while the lark carolled o'er us on the way as he floated in mid-air on that bright morning—when few were so merry as we. We visited the stables, caressed the horses, and I must own my delight at finding the Friar in splendid condition—and I felt thankful towards Bradly, inasmuch I knew he spoke the truth when he told me, that he had promised the boy, George, to let him off a thrashing for his next offence provided the horse was up to the mark on Master Fred's arrival; aye, and two glorious days' sport I had on that admirable hunter's back, the one with the Duke, the other with the Earl, during my brief sojourn at Brooklands—but, I repeat, those were truly never to be forgotten days in the sunshine of my life. After passing an hour with our favourite quadrupeds, we strolled on to the home of old Forster—he was standing at his door as we

approached, and his welcome was one of such truthful affection, that, in my subsequent journey through the rough road of life, I have often thought me of the iron pressure of his bony hand, and admitted, that there was more sincerity in his cordial grasp, than in all the plausibility of worldly friendship, tendered to-day, forgotten to-morrow.

“I am stagnated,” said the dear old man; “but had I known you would have arrived by the mail, Master Fred, I should have been the first to welcome you; but Mr. Hind told me you could not reach the Hall ere night-fall—and so, this being the last day but one of the season, I beat the out-lying preserves for a few pheasants; and, when I took my bag to the House, and heard tell of your arrival, I hastened home, as I well knowed you and Miss Gussy would be down afore long to see the dogs. But I’m stagnated, if you’re not growed like a poplar, and there aint nothing about you Frenchified that I see, Master Fred, though you have been among the Mounsiers.”

“For once, you’re wrong, Forster—we

came to see you, not the dogs ; and I am rejoiced to find you so hearty—this is truth ; so now, without jealousy, we will visit the pets.”

And thus we passed our morning ; dear Gussy told me much that caused me pain, and much that caused me pleasure, possibly, the latter had the advantage ; but we were now of an age to reason—and the visit of Snare-all, on which she dwelt with some pain, determined me to speak to our dear Dad on the subject, who, even from our boyhood, wisely made us his companions, as well as sons, in all matters not absolutely unnecessary. Selwyn was also another cause of pain—Gussy had not heard from him for some weeks : he was then wandering in Italy, and alone, whither he had returned, after a brief visit to England. The Lodge was let, possibly to a very respectable man—but he was not precisely suited to take the place of our old friend, either in the county or the hunt, though he affected a little hunting ; nor was he a visitor at the Hall, save on occasional periods of courtesy ; in fact, some said, Mr.

Snieder—Squire they never termed him—had dealt largely in the soap line, and, having made a good sum, in yellow and mottled household, he invested a few thousands in the great aristocratic line, when shares were gold bars; and, having doubled his thousands, wisely cut soap-boiling and railway boilers, and aspired to that which he was not, and which money alone can never make a man—that is, to be a gentleman. Others said, he had been to India, and had dealt in all things, from fish-hooks to figs, elephant's tusks to shoe-nails; I cannot vouch for the truth of either, all I know is, that he went out with the hounds, but not exactly to hunt—riding was not precisely his forte. And so the noble Earl would at times shout, in all courtesy, "There you are, Mr. Snieder, always where you ought not to be—far better remain at home, and read about hounds, than come out to ride over them." Such was the person who had succeeded poor Selwyn at the Lodge, though scarcely in the hearts of the neighbourhood; and I confess, the man, as his belongings, were neither

to my taste—possibly, that I held Selwyn in so much estimation; moreover, he had a handsome daughter, called Angelica, and a son, named Hilarius—both the one and the other positively abominable to me. The why might be explained in the vanity and presumption of the young lady, who fancied that Pa's money, was a patent of nobility. While his son considered himself a man of fashion, and truly was he, so far as his tailor made him; but I fancy, after all, their greatest vulgarity, in my eyes, consisted in their vain endeavours to fill the place of him who was a wanderer on the Continent. Both father and son had expressed a desire that Anderson should remain at the head of their stud; but this he positively refused, though good wages were offered. Bradly subsequently informed me the reason: "I could have done my duty by a real sportsman," he said, "but to serve a man who does not know a horse from an elephant, and has no heart to ride one, it won't do, Bradly, it won't do; besides, that young Squire, as he calls himself—Squire, indeed—why he treats horses

as he would Hottentots, and servants like slaves." And Anderson, I fancy, was right.

After we had rambled over all our haunts and familiar scenes, visiting a neighbour here and a neighbour there, we returned to the Hall—and finding our beloved Dad alone in the library, I frankly questioned him in reference to the visit of Snareall and his railway schemes.

"Gussy has told you correctly," he observed—as it appeared to me with some reluctance. "This Mr. Snareall has again visited Brooklands and I have reason to believe, that however individually he may be a gainer by his endeavours to convince me, that I shall act wisely in submitting to that which will put thousands into my pocket, rather than end in my only obtaining hundreds—that he is not far wrong when he states that I should fight a losing battle were I to reject them. I own to you, Fred, that I look on a railway cutting through the end of Brookland Park, as a positive infliction; but what can one man do among thousands who are all mad on the subject, railways. So, possibly,

it will be as well to submit with a good grace. I have lived generally up to my income, and recollect, darling Gussy and you, and Arty, must be provided for. And so—as I do not think after all these engineers will greatly interfere with our fox coverts, I shall just play Mr. Snareall down the stream a little longer, and then pocket the affront”—which he subsequently did—and thus commenced the fall of a family, which for centuries had held its head high among the landed aristocracy of old England.

CHAPTER VI.

HAVING dressed for dinner, I threw open my window, and looked forth on that cheerful park-land, on those glorious woodlands of my Fatherland; contrasting, not favourably I admit, the scenes I had so recently left; the glowing sun of commencing spring was smiling behind the dark blue distant hills, while the lengthening day still lingered as if unwilling to leave so fair a scene in darkness. The birds caused the woods to echo with their last full notes ere they retired to rest—and all nature was still and beautiful. And as I looked again and again on that much loved scene, I truly felt for once in my life that I was happy—happy

in myself, happy in the worldly prospects opening to me, and supremely happy in the association of those of my home. With such thoughts I shut the casement and descended to that charming room, mine own Dad's library, where we were in the habit of generally assembling when alone, or with firm friends of our house—a sketch of which I have already given. As I opened the door, the room appeared to me to be at first unoccupied, save by our old faithful friend, Nadir; but I had scarcely shut it, ere I beheld the graceful form of a girl, who caressingly bent over the noble animal, and I heard her sweet voice say, “Dear old fellow—do you know your old friend, Fred, is returned—are you not glad, Nadir? Yes, that you are, I am sure, as are we all.” I had time for an instant, ere she heard me enter—for the room was large, and she appeared entirely engrossed with the dog—to look at her small and beautiful head, her slight and elegant form—and as she rose in half-confusion to welcome me with a face suffused with blushes, I could scarcely be-

lieve that the graceful intelligent being who stood before me with her hand in mine, was really my friend and playmate, Nelly—dressed in the most simple, yet befitting taste; her light hair in almost natural ringlets clustering around her infantine, yet naturally pale and speaking countenance. I truly felt at that moment that whatever my feelings towards her had been as a mere boy, when I was wont to give the best rose or wild nosegay, plucked during our rambles, with sundry other juvenile attentions, that I had scarcely ever beheld so loveable a being—and I loved her. Indeed, in after life, in the hour of sorrow as in happiness, in health and sickness, at home as abroad—Nelly, as I then saw her, caressing that faithful hound—Nelly, as I beheld her, grown almost from childhood to womanhood, the warm welcome she gave me, the unaffected truthful gladness which she evinced in the society of our circle at Brooklands that evening, has never, and will never be obliterated from memory while life lasts. I write these lines far, far away from those

dear scenes, but Nelly, your soft blue eye still appears to look on me with affection, your gentle voice to assure me that death alone will sever affections, nurtured almost in the cradle, and as unchangeable as unchanged.

The days passed rapidly during my brief visit at home, throughout the greater portion of which time Nelly remained as Gussy's visitor. I met the hounds more than once, was splendidly carried by the Friar, and heartily welcomed by the noble hearted Duke, the Earl, and the hunt who had known me from the period of my appearing at the covert side, till that, when as a Light Dragoon officer I fearlessly bestrode my favourite hunter, and felt that I ought to do my best to lead the field. Whether I did so or not I will not pretend to say, or cannot recollect. One unexpected event had occurred during my absence, the marriage of Barleycorn. Chance, or a lucky turn of fortune, had thrown in his way the woman of all others suited to be his wife; and struck, as men often are, by many dissimilarities of character to his own, he was all at once, as he

declared taken aback, and certainly not in an evil hour for him, she consented to accept him for better and worse, splendid waistcoats and all—the Jumper was not included in the bargain, having been sold for thirty pounds, although nothing could convince the owner of Peacock Farm that he had not lost a hundred by taking the money. Of course, Gussy, Nelly, Wasp, and I, went up to congratulate the worthy yeoman; and I must admit, that while on the one hand I found Mrs. Barleycorn to be a sensible, amiable woman, who forswore flounces and finery, and could boast of having some of the best pigs and poultry in the county, Barleycorn had made considerable progress in the sowing of his wild oats, and bid fair to sober down into a straight-forward, sensible, and respected yeoman, with means above the world, and withal, a true and honest heart, ready to do a kind and Christian act by his neighbour; and in such position, which was his true one, he had little excuse to change it.

“Heartily glad to see you, Master Fred,” he exclaimed, as we entered the homestead, “how you are growed—like a poplar, I

declare—a rare officer you will make, I take it; and if you gets into a charge, I knows who can ride. How do the agriculturists get on in France, Sir? Did you look into the corn market?”

“No, Barleycorn, I cannot say I did; but this I can assure you with great truth, I saw no ricks like those in your yard.”

“Well, well, sir, as you say, they are good ricks; and I have reason to be contented. But come, Miss Gussy, walk in, and see the missus; there is no poultry like hers in all the country round; I must send the first chicks that are fit down to the Hall.” We did pay a visit to Mrs. Barleycorn, and having done so, and been most kindly greeted, we agreed that Barleycorn was a fortunate man in all respects. But time flew fast, far too fast, amid such happiness. Dear Gussy and Nelly were my constant companions on non-hunting days, and one fine morning they did accompany me to the meet, when two more graceful, well mounted girls were never seen at the covert side.

The morning of parting, however, once

more arrived, and although few apparently had so bright a career before them, I confess that almost for the first time my heart felt heavy. And when I bade farewell to Gussy, and then took the hand of Nelly, feelings which were then somewhat difficult to define came over me. But neither the parting with the one or the other was the principal cause of my depression. No; during that brief sojourn at Brooklands, I had witnessed with regret the gradually increasing interest which our dear Dad appeared to take in the contending railway affairs, which now, on paper, at least, were intersecting the country. New scenes, however, the anxious hopes of youth, pleasing anticipations of joining my regiment, and those of visiting my younger brother, who was now at Ch. Church, and with whom I was about to pass a day or two previous to proceeding by Holyhead to Ireland, soon banished care, and ere I approached the beautiful city of Oxford I felt my spirits rise again. At periods my feelings reverted to those with whom I had passed so many pleasant months in France.

But I confess that Matilde and Clarisse would hardly bear comparison with such girls as Gussy and Nelly. I heard, however, constantly from Temple, who after having endeavoured to console himself with a little flirtation, became at length daily more anxious to enter the army, and ere many months had elapsed, I was rejoiced to see him gazetted to one of the finest regiments in the army, the Royal Fusiliers. Chevreul was positively downcast at this event; but he promised to come to England, and as the sequel will shew, come he did—and more, became a favourite with us all.

But here I am in the fair city of learning and future bishops; I had come there, as I have named, to visit my brother Arty. As the coach drew up at the door of the Angel—if I recollect correctly that was the name of the Hotel—there were no railways then—with some other young Ch. Church men, he stood ready to receive me, and the usual warm and brotherly courtesies having passed, together with my baggage, I was speedily conveyed to some very commodious and

elegant apartments, called college rooms, situated at the extremity of the cloisters of that most celebrated college. These rooms commanded a view of a noble avenue of ancient elm trees, called the "Broad Walk," now, I fancy, tolerably well known to half the world, but more particularly so to the nursery maids and their precious charges, domiciled in that classic city. As I stood for a moment in admiration of these splendid trees, whose equal I had certainly never beheld in Normandy, to say nothing of the nursery-maids, my fraternity's attentions commenced, "Well, General," for he had already in his good-humour promoted me thus far, "Well, General, we must give you a favourable opinion of our College hospitality, in order to prepare you for the mess room, as well as for Irish festivities. My friend Larkum gives a feed at his lodgings, where he is domiciled, awaiting rooms—his out quarters, as you military men would term them—and he has requested me to solicit your attendance at six to a moment by

"Old Tom," * to meet a few friends of ours, and of Oriel; we will return here to sup about ten, only a few oysters and Oxford sausages—the best in the world—a sneaker or two, as that fellow Snareall terms grog. We can talk over serious matters to-morrow. By the bye, you have not yet told me of the dear ones at Brooklands; Nelly's a sweet girl, is she not, brother mine?"

"I left them all well; and you say truly, Nelly is greatly improved."

"By the bye," he continued, "how did you leave the Chevalier de Laine, and his adorable daughters, Matilde and Clarisse? Temple wrote me word, Matilde was charming. He wants me to run over at Easter, and take the other girl off his hands, I fancy; but it won't do; I shall start for the Hall, and have a little trout fishing, or come over to Ireland, beat up your quarters, have a look at the Irish girls, and whip a salmon stream." At this rate he rattled on, in the fulness of of his heart at the pleasure of our meeting.

* The celebrated bell of Christ Church, Oxford.

However, to the out quarters we went at six. Tom tolled the hour clearly and distinctly, for Tom of Ch. Church speaks full and loud; he is no stammerer—there is no mistaking his clapper. And there we met with a hearty welcome from as pleasant a party of collegians as ever sat down to an excellent dinner with undeniable appetites to eat it. Good humour and good breeding was the order of the party; and as far as I was able to judge, the wine was first-rate. Good, bad, or indifferent, I drank my share, I fear more than my share, if only in honour of my calling. After dinner, cigars were introduced; till then I had never accustomed myself to a vice, if you will, which has since become a daily habit.

“Do you smoke, soldier,” said the host. Of course I did; smoking was then sanctioned in the army. My younger brother set the example, so I forthwith selected one of Hudson’s best—the first my lips had ever pressed—seized the match as had I been a German, and commenced puffing out a cloud. At this identical moment, great “Tom” sent

forth a most tremendous bang; the night was intensely cold, dull, and calm, one of winter's last farewell pinchers, and on such occasions sound is ever more distinct. But the bang, like the report of a cannon, astonished me not a little; nevertheless, I puffed on and counted, counted and listened, but judge my astonishment when the thirteenth bang pealed through the quiet city. Now, all who are acquainted with Oxford, are also aware that this magnificent bell strikes each night, at the hour of nine, or thereabouts, or rather tolls, one hundred and one times in commemoration of the foundation of an establishment in support of the above number of students on the revenues of Ch. Church College. Of this fact I was previously unaware, and it was fortunate that such was the case; my astonishment may nevertheless be readily imagined, and the amusement which it caused to my companions augmented when I hurriedly exclaimed, that the clock must either have run down or gone mad. Then I began to conceive that I must either have indulged in a glass of port too

much, or have counted double; and as the fumes of the cigar took rapid effect on a brain totally unaccustomed to tobacco, I surmised a variety of coincidents never dreamt of before within the precincts of so clerical a city.

Curiosity or precaution, however, excited by fortunate instinct, at length induced me to make a speedy retreat towards the window, which looked out on one of the most splendid streets in the world, ycleped the High Street, in order to satisfy myself that it really was Tom that was going off at such a rate, and that the city was not besieged, in which case my military knowledge might have been serviceable to the beadles. But alas! either the excellent dinner I had eaten, or the wine and laughter, or more probably the effects of the cigar, created an unusual all-overishness in my brain, or my inward man; indeed, a sensation far more afflicting, though somewhat similar to that I had experienced on my voyage from Dover to Calais.

Instantaneous and overwhelming was the

crisis that followed. But let me halt, for my pen is unequal to tell the tale; as, however, two Proctors, who were passing at the moment, were sensibly affected by my position, and one now lives a Bishop, for my part I desire to forget the finale for his sake.

"Let me hold your head, General," said Arty—for I have already named that his fraternal affection had promoted me thus far—as it emerged from a basin of water in which I had immersed it, while he diluted my nostrils with half a bottle of Eau de Cologne.

What became of the Proctors the Bishop can tell. Two hours afterwards I was as fresh and lively as ever, had acknowledged the undeniable excellence of the Oxford sausages at supper, talked largely of hunting and the gastronomic pastime of broaching a barrel of natives, and learned, not only to concoct, but to drink some of the best punch that ere was brewed within gunshot of the Isis. Added to which, I had invited some half-dozen commoners and gentlemen commoners to visit me at my quarters in old

Ireland. Time, however, the more pleasant the hours, is fleeting ; and ere the advent of another day was tolled by Tom's lusty clapper, I had sunk between the linen sheets of a shake-down prepared for me on the sofa, and was soon in happy ignorance of all around me.

Dire was the consternation of the University when daylight broke once more o'er the countless spires of the classic city. The night, which had closed in dark and gloomy coldness, was followed after midnight by a heavy fall of snow, changing about day-break into a clear, hard frost. I was quietly dreaming of Nelly, duels, sham fights, Oxford sausages, hunting, and French girls, when in rushed my fraternity, exclaiming, "Get up, General, get up ; move your military corps ; here's the diable to pay, and no one to pay him."

By St. Hubert, as I endeavoured to open my eyes, and rouse myself, I began to imagine I had got into the city of the plague, or that some scene in the Arabian Nights was acting for my especial amuse-

ment, so constant had been my excitement since I had set foot within the precincts of the Proctors. But, no; it was all true as the sun which shone into the room. There was, indeed the diable, and a painter, or more than one, to pay also.

Having quickly slipped into my unmentionables and slipped on a great coat, I followed hastily with the throng that was pouring forth to the Great Quod, so termed, or square of the College, when lo! what a sight was there to greet the eyes of a cornet. The snow, yet unthawed, rested on the "bustle" and pate of the leaden god, Mercury, who stood in operative posture on one leg, in the centre of a small round fountain — a sort of Trafalgar basin in miniature—and as white as a large sheet on the grassy and well kept surface of the centre enclosure, as yet untrodden by human foot. Situated around this Square, as all who have visited Oxford will recollect, are the handsome residences of the Dean, and other cathedral dignitaries,—and each of these houses had on the day previous exhibited to

the admiring eye of the stranger a handsome oaken entrance door, probably a dozen in number. Now recollect the white snow, the brilliant sun, and the black assembly—for most of those who had hastened to the scene, had hastily thrown on their academicals. The towering form of Tom and the noble range of buildings—and then conceive, that all these hitherto dark oaken doors, as if by the hand of a geni—for of course none other could have done it—had during the stillness of the night been painted a glaring red, made far more brilliant and effective by the whiteness which reigned on the earth. Some of the faces round and near to the spot where I stood, looked gloomy enough—the noses of others eclipsed the doors in redness—the majority, in fact, appeared awe-struck at the indignity thus practised on the honour of the College.

Not so, I confess did I—I loved the colour, scarlet—in the hunting field as elsewhere—and while I thought it an admirable joke, I had no fear of Deans, Dons or Proctors, and I laughed while the tears ran

down my cheeks—till called to order by a sedate young gentleman, who evidently imagined that the road to promotion was through the front entrance of a Church dignitary.

“You appear amused, Sir,” he observed, with a face as long as his leg.

“I am, Sir,” I replied, “very greatly amused; this is a sight only to be seen once in a lifetime—moreover, never to be forgotten, and nothing to pay.”

“You are not a member of the University, I presume?” he continued, “If so, you would rather feel hurt at the absurd indignity offered to the heads of the first College in the world.”

“Heads or tails,” I answered, still laughing, to his great annoyance, “I stick to my colour, which is scarlet—or rather, blue turned up with the same. A colour that appears to me this morning to prevail in the physiognomies of the assembled crowd; so, good morning, Sir, for the cold obliges me to beat a retreat.”

In fact, I laugh now in recollection of

that ludicrous scene, and I would hope that he who chided me was promoted to a prebendal stall, ere they fell into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

Having enjoyed the fun as I then termed it, to my heart's content, I once more returned to my brother's rooms, and was made comfortable by a blazing fire, a renewal of my acquaintance with the Oxford sausages, and an admirable breakfast—for fast days at Ch. Church were then *dies non*.

Having discussed this agreeable meal, my young brother jokingly made the following remarks: "I'll tell you what it is, Fred, when you join, take my advice—never abuse your commanding officer—be always up in time to reach parade ere the second bugle blows. Jenkins, of the Life-Guards, has a string tied to his great toe, and his servant has orders to pull till he is wide awake; one morning he pulled his toe out of joint, since which, he has never been late. When I first came to Ch. Church, I fancied I would try the same dodge, as I could not rouse myself for chapel. The only time when I feel wide

awake, is on hunting mornings, but I am getting accustomed to it now, though I have scarcely ever time to wash myself till service is over—but it's all the same in good company. Never"—he was about to proceed, when a tap was heard at the door, and he was courteously requested to attend a summons from the Dean. "What on earth does he want with me? I am never late for chapel or lectures," he exclaimed. "Oh, I have it! he probably wishes to do the polite, and ask you to dine with him, General; if so, recollect, Fred, you must refuse—too slow by half, does not like hunting, is given to boiled mutton and all that. Yet, on second thoughts, that cannot be his intention—it must be something about this painting affair—but what had I to do with it?"

How the room rang with our laughter—of course the summons was obeyed, so I made myself comfortable during his absence—endeavoured to smoke another cigar, and succeeded better than I had done the night previous, till at length he appeared with a dolorous countenance; whether from indig-

nation or mere annoyance, on my behalf, I know not. If the latter, he might have saved himself the pain—for I thought it, in schoolboy phraseology, capital fun.

“Come, Fred,” he said on returning, “your presence is also solicited at the Decanal domicile. His very Reverence has been informed that a soldier officer has been quartered in the College, and although the idea is sufficiently ludicrous to outweigh the offence, he surmises in his wrath that the colour scarlet could have found so much favour only in the eyes of a militaire; more, that the hand preparing to wield the sword, has practised during the night past in flourishing the painter’s brush.”

Here was another cause of amusement; nevertheless, I obeyed the orders of the University Sovereign, and little time elapsed ere we were ushered into a most elegant library, where robed in canonicals, sat my most reverend accuser. I shall pass over the scene which then and there took place; suffice, I clearly proved an alibi—and having received a courteous, possibly intended for a

kind apology, the Decanal doors were once more closed on Cornet Western. Not so, however, was my mouth when I beheld a dozen painter boys scrubbing away lustily to deface the scandal of the previous night, while the melting snow discovered patches of green, as if some unseen hand was scrubbing also at the lawn. Indeed, our shouts of merriment were quite out of all decorum, and well nigh as loud as the clapper of Old Tom.

On that evening I dined at the Gentlemen Commoners' table, in the noble Banqueting Hall, a most agreeable and well-regulated mess-table. After which I joined Arty, and we went to "wine," and what not at the rooms of a noble collegian; and having fully enjoyed the various tales and surmises which passed around in reference to the scarlet fever, to which the doors had succumbed in so cold a season, I retired to prepare for my departure on the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

“Good bye, dear Arty!” “Good bye, dear Fred!” “Recollect, you will come to Ireland, if I do not get leave and join you at Brooklands, in the long vacation.” And seated on the box of a first-rate coach, I rattled onwards at ten miles an hour.

I am not intending to inflict on my readers an account of my coach journey to Holyhead and thence, by steam to the fair city of Dublin, though forsooth, there is much of interest in such details, to all save those who are wedded, if not wisely, yet too well to Continental scenes, instead of sometimes giving a passing idle hour in learning

something of their own beautiful England, of which, perchance, they know little or nothing ; suffice, that I arrived after a rapid passage in that beautiful Bay of Dublin. And after having passed four-and-twenty hours in the capital of the Emerald Island, journeyed on rapidly towards the headquarters of my regiment, then stationed in the south.

Now, the impressions which take forcible hold of a youthful heart on entering the career of arms, at first bright and clear as the noonday sun, are seldom effaced even amid the practical proofs of after life ; which, nevertheless, prove sooner or later that the enthusiasm was somewhat overcharged, the pleasurable anticipation somewhat overrated. Thus, although many years have elapsed since the first morning that I found myself in a barrack, my future home—a barrack-yard, the theatre of my daily drillings—it is still engraved distinctly on my memory. And if time has had the effect of somewhat temporising my ideal fancies of a military life, it had only then the beneficial effect on

my mind of softening down an admiration founded on an overwrought imagination. Hitherto, I had thought of nothing but frolic, feasting and finery—the bright side of the picture shone forth vividly. Military pomp and military trappings,

“Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery,
Their various arms that glitter in the air.”

In fact, the idea of drills, guard-mountings, detachments, foreign quarters, and the hardships of a soldier's career, were then as a dead letter in my book of life. The chaise in which I travelled at length entered the barrack-gate and drove towards the officers' quarters; the day was cold and dreary, and the country through which I had passed, like that with which I was on all sides surrounded, was as cheerless as the brightest imagination can paint. As in regard to the station of my regiment, it was, I must admit, as unsightly a market-town of half mud habitations, as Derrynane may be, for aught I know to the contrary. As into the Barrack Square and across the parade-

ground the chaise rattled on my right, I beheld two or three squads of recruits, and awkward enough were they, balanced on one leg, hard at the goose-step. Some of these squads were composed of that splendid corps, the 42nd Highlanders; the remainder of dismounted men, of the regiment to which I belonged, who were enduring a little airing for their piccadilloes. Right, left, wheel, march, halt, and numerous other words of command reverberated through the square, to say nothing of the discordant sounds of diabolical music, caused by the practising of the bagpipes and drums of the Highlanders, sufficient to scare away all the crows in the neighbourhood. No martial sounds were there such as I anticipated; at length, my yellow vehicle drew up before the mess-room, against the windows of which several noses were flattened, belonging to officers of all ranks, who evidently contemplated with pleasure the unusual sight of a chaise and pair—in fact, anything was novelty to men who had been eight months quartered in that Irish banishment.

Up and down the pavement in front of the barracks paced one solitary individual with his hands in his trowser's pocket; pardon me, but at the moment I was totally unaware that he ranked among my brother officers, though I discovered subsequently that he was a very amiable assistant-surgeon. His face—I fancy the cold had tinted the tip of his nose—was by no means handsome or aristocratic; for all that he proved himself a very courteous man, and doubtless, was a very gallant officer. His dress, however, did by no means come up to my ideas of military costume. His coat, braided and befrogged, had once been blue, but several seasons of Irish wear had made even this fact a question of uncertainty; his pantaloons, also of well-worn blue, on which there had once been a broad gold stripe, now of a leaden colour, he might at one time in his life have been measured for—in such case, however, he had grown considerably since that event took place, inasmuch as they did not cover one-half the ankle of a pair of boots which neither

Gilbert or Hoby would have recognised as such—to the heels of which were attached a pair of long brass spurs. Straps he evidently considered out of fashion, or discarded them, save on parade—and as to Everett's blacking, it was a luxury unknown or unappreciated. In truth, the sight of this gallant gentleman's attire, considerably damped my ardour in reference to military finery—the more so, when I recollected the handsome uniform of my regiment, as the first-rate kit my portmanteaus contained. Nevertheless, whatever his outward appearance, he proved himself kind and courteous; and having stepped from the vehicle, some eight stone and a half of dandified human nature, and made myself known to him as Cornet Western; he forthwith conducted me to the Colonel, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and who, gallant old soldier and admirable gentleman as he was, cordially greeted me.

“Welcome, most welcome, Mr. Western,” he exclaimed; “as a member of my corps; you are a light weight and active

figure ; your good qualities as regards horsemanship have preceded you. My good friend tells me in his letter you ride well to hounds. I like to see my lads leading a good field, and I regret that the hunting season is well nigh over, otherwise you would have been initiated into Irish hunting. But come, I must introduce you to your brother officers ;" by whom I was courteously and kindly received — there were among them many young men of rank and fortune, several of my own age, and all of a similar position in life ; an effect which soon obliterated the unpleasing idea of the first impression I had formed. The kind-hearted Colonel then conducted me to the quarters allotted to me, consisting of a white-washed apartment five feet by four,—the furniture of which consisted of a table, two chairs, a set of fire-irons, and a coal-box—all marked with the broad arrow, proving them to have been generously provided for my use by the liberality of the nation.

Settled, as settled I could be in this bare-walled apartment, with thoughts reverting

to the comforts of dear Brooklands, for the first time, save that in which I had appeared in full dress for the satisfaction of my dear mother, Gussy, and Nelly, to say nothing of the whole Brookland establishment, I attired myself in the handsome uniform of my regiment—admired myself greatly in the glass, having no one else to admire me, and then proceeded, according to his request, to the apartments of my gallant chief, whom I found prepared to join the mess, the bugle which announced the hour of dinner then sounding.

As I entered the room, and beheld his handsome, though somewhat large, person standing on the hearth-rug, I thought I had seldom looked on a more soldier-like man—and I may add, that his smile was one of the most charming I ever beheld, not belieing in the least degree his kindly disposition.

“Come, Western,” he said, “I must take the head of the table to-day, and do you honour; your uniform becomes you—the Westerns have given some good soldiers to-

the service: I well recollect your gallant uncle, who fell, when leading his cavalry corps, at Salamanca; and, in other days, I have hunted in the vale of Berkeley, when quartered at ——, and have seen the home of your ancestors.”

When we entered the mess-room, I was introduced to those of my brother officers whom I had not already seen. The Colonel took the head of the table, and I sat on his right, for that night an honoured guest—although neither the cuisine or the gallant warriors who sat around the well-supplied board came precisely up to the picture I had mentally formed of them in my youthful imagination. I, nevertheless, passed a most agreeable evening at this my first mess-dinner; and the hour of midnight had long sounded on all the clocks of ——, if there were any, ere, with a head somewhat confused from the effects of indifferent sherry, worse champagne, and admirable whiskey-punch (for those who can drink it, which, after that night, I never could), I was conveyed by a good-natured and somewhat portly

major, who took pity on my years, to my white-washed dormitory.

I shall pass over, briefly, the reminiscences of my short sojourn in the dominions of the late King Dan, and hasten forward to more stirring events ; suffice, that I went through the ordeal of the riding-school—and it has since seemed to me, that the effect was rather that of causing a somewhat light hand to make too much use of the bit, and a good firm hunting-seat to become rather a stiff, uneasy one ; however, I bumped through the usual bumping, and then cut and slashed away with a broad sword, like mad, till I was fit for a fugleman, and was at length reported by the adjutant a good subject to be cut down in a charge, or blown up with gunpowder. Then came another routine of duty, far more agreeable, and, consequently, sooner learnt, viz., that of making love to every Irish girl in the neighbourhood—and, to do them justice, dear creatures, they were as ready to give the lesson as were their papas profuse in their hospitality to military men. No introduction was required, enough that

you were an officer—and, consequently, a gentleman. The former was sufficient guarantee for the latter—shame be to him who abuses the trust. I also learnt the accomplishment of riding across country on an Irish hunter, not, however, without, in the first instance, obtaining two black eyes and a bloody nose; for, although, without presumption, I could declare myself a good horseman, and, as these pages have already related, passionately fond of the animal, as the riding of it, to which I had been accustomed from my earliest recollection, yet I had ever been mounted, when hunting, on English horses, or flyers, and, consequently, totally unprepared for the topping-bank system of the best of all horses—a well-bred, powerful Irish hunter.

Short, however, as was my sojourn among the inhabitants of Erin, I managed to get a sight of hounds on almost the last day of the season. And as my stud at the period only consisted of a very handsome, thorough bred charger, and my favourite Friar, which horse I had been permitted to bring over

from Brooklands, a brother officer very kindly mounted me. We soon found, and being naturally anxious at once to stamp myself as a rider to hounds, I charged two or three timber jumps of considerable magnitude, and finding the horse I rode was a first-rate animal, and carried me like a feather, I pressed him forward, and soon obtained a leading place, being determined to follow a good sportsman, who had been pointed out to me. As we galloped across a grass field, there appeared in our line a high bank, with a deep ditch on the take-off side, and as I subsequently discovered, a similar one on the landing side; the rider before me rode at it unhesitatingly; the noble animal on which he was mounted rose at the bank, struck away a portion of the top, appeared to rest in the air for half a second, then bounded into the opposite field, and was off again in the wake of the hounds. I confess to having imagined it to be a bungle, and expected to see my leader on his head, therefore, taking a pull at my own horse, I approached it at full gallop, with both spurs

in, but the good beast knew his work better than I did, and although irritated at this unusual treatment, he slackened his pace as he neared the fence, rose at it calmly, just touched the top of the bank, though with less force than he who led had done, and without breaking his stride cleared the large ditch on the other side, and bounded forward. For this I was in no manner prepared. I expected to fly in the air, and sat accordingly; the result was, that my nose came in contact with the horse's head, and as he descended, I was on his neck. The blood flew from my wounded nose, my eyes flashed fire; and although I managed to recover myself, and got up at the end of the run in sufficient time to prove myself a better man than many in the field, the terrible headache I subsequently endured—to say little of the black eyes which kept me a prisoner to my room for a week—gave me the first and only lesson I required as regards the admirable fencing of Irish hunters, who thus save themselves from unnecessary exertion and their riders many falls.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was with far more pleasure than pain that I ascertained one morning, only two months subsequently to my joining in Ireland, that our gallant Colonel had received notice that our regiment would be immediately removed to England; and shortly afterwards we received the route, and marched to Cork. It was my first march, and although short, on our arrival at Cork we found that transports had arrived to transport the whole regiment to Old England; and I may very justly observe that there were very few, either among the men or officers, who were not transported by the pleasurable anticipa-

tion of returning there. For my part, I already considered myself once more at dear Brooklands, and I looked forward with joy to the hour of embarkation. To those who have undergone the detestable ordeal of a sea voyage in a transport, ere the advent of Government steamers made matters more pleasing, and this in company with some score horses, I need not recapitulate the horrors we endured; to those whose lot may not have compelled them to such sickening misery, I will only add, that I shall never forget the pangs I suffered during that long and perilous voyage, which ought to have occupied fifty hours, but which lasted more than a week. The weather was boisterous, the sea rough, the vessel of the worst description, and the accommodation, both for men and horses, vile in the extreme. Our existence on board oppressive and unwholesome, most of us wretchedly ill, and although many tried to put a good face on the matter, we were at length in such imminent danger, when beating about against contrary winds and tides, to weather the

Land's End, that all succumbed, and merri-
ment was out of the question. By Mars
and all other gentlemen-soldiers, I swear
the inventor of steam ought to have been
made Lord High Admiral, and created a
Duke, were it only that troops are now
conveyed by steam instead of transports.

At length a merciful Providence per-
mitted us to enter the Channel, for the
master of the vessel or the man at the helm
had nothing whatever to do with it, save
that they well nigh stranded us on the
Goodwin Sands. At last—happy event!
joyful termination to disgust and danger!—
we came to an anchor, landed, and marched
to the beautiful old cathedral town of C——.
Heartily was I glad to find that the Friar
was safe and sound; not so with very many
of the horses, they had suffered dreadfully.
Such was the economy practised on the
army.

Three months had scarcely elapsed since
the scarlet fever that raged at Oxford, which
had caused so much amusement to me in-
dividually, and subsequently many a merry

laugh at the mess table, and yet in that brief space I had made considerable progress in the practical knowledge of life. I had also been initiated into the admirable discipline of my gallant corps, for which I was not ungrateful, and certainly not a whit the less joyous. Things were scarcely settled after our disagreeable voyage, and we began to find ourselves most pleasantly quartered, when I received the following letter from Temple, who was stationed at Chatham :—

“DEAR FRED,—I have this moment heard of your arrival at C——. Circumstances prevent my starting by the mail which will convey this, or, be assured, you would have seen me ere sunrise ; therefore, you must come here at once, recollect.—I am all anxiety once more to behold you,

“Yours,

“C. TEMPLE.”

I had no idea that Temple was so near me—a pleasure, indeed, that I little expected ; nevertheless, I lost no time in ob-

taining permission from my gallant chief, to absent myself for a few days, and that very night I sat beside my friend at his own mess-table.

There is scarcely an infantry officer in the service who is not fully acquainted with Chatham Barracks, it would, therefore, be a matter of supererogation on my part were I to describe them at any length in these pages. The avenue, or rather belt of trees, if they still flourish untouched by the destructive hand of improvement, is, however, a very pleasant lounge after breakfast, with a cigar as your companion, the railings being so agreeably placed, that subs may recline thereon, dangle their legs, and listen to the band. Their quarters, also, offer advantages over most others I know of—inasmuch, as be your nature somewhat indolent, you may therein indulge yourself, by reposing in bed of a cold morning, stir up your fire, open your door, or perform any other duty, without the necessity of leaving your couch; indeed, should the weather be warm, you can also readily open the window, turn round, and seek re-

newed repose. Truly the nation is most liberal to subs, in thus providing them such agreeable dens, which they are permitted to occupy rent free—and free lodgings, truly, are they, for where is the residence throughout the land to be compared in freedom to a barrack-room. Talk of your ease at your inn!—it is all very well, if you have equal ease in a well-filled purse. But who is half so free as a sub in his own barrack-room, with his own coal-box, and unlimited permission to poke his own fire. There, without rent to pay, he is lord of all he surveys; and in such luxurious quarters I was made welcome by my amiable, but fastidious friend, Temple. How warmly we shook hands, how many things we had to say in fact, although hours had elapsed, I felt I had told nothing, and heard less, interesting to us both, ere the dinner-hour arrived, and I was introduced to a very pleasant circle of companions. We had time during dinner, however, to speak of the Quequovilliers, and even Chevreul, who had faithfully promised to come to England. Dinner over; and

those who have dined at a mess, when a stranger sits at the board, are tolerably well acquainted with the fact, that nothing can exceed the courteous attention shewn by all to the guest of a brother officer—the more so if he be a favourite. The ordeal I therefore went through, in mere courteous hob-nob-bings, ere the night was far advanced, was by no means inconsiderable, and in like manner many of the joyous circle drank freely.

I had a light heart and a tolerably well-filled purse in those happy days, and was up to any thing, as the old proverb says, from “pitch and toss to manslaughter;” and, probably, on some occasions I was wont to consider a frolic in a light the Horse Guards did not precisely agree in. The errors of youth, however, were then more or less considered errors of youth, and dealt with accordingly. But let that pass, I desire to judge myself rather than others—and I, therefore, must admit, these juvenile errors, if justly weighed as to right or wrong, could not always come under the denomination of

mere puerile frolics, and it would probably have been as well had we not always got off so lightly. As it was late on the night in question, I scarcely recollect now the cause of unusual inspiration, but, possibly, it may be attributed to light hearts and sparkling champagne, that several thoughtless spirits, accompanied by Temple and I, sallied forth for what is termed, a spree—that is, for a little entertainment of various kinds, according to the taste of the wanderer in search of such midnight revelries; doubtless, we were amply repaid for our trouble, for the morning hour had arrived at four ere we determined to return to our quarters.

Now, in those days there was an Hotel—and, possibly, there is one now—in the immediate vicinity of the barrack-gate; whether it was called the “Sun,” or the “Moon,” I cannot precisely recollect, and it is of little importance. But it so occurred, that on arriving at this point on our return, the whole party all at once recollected that a broiled bone, or an anchovy toast, or any similar delicacy, was extremely palatable

nutriment after midnight, and this recollection took such forcible hold on our gastronomic senses, that have them, or something equally appetisant, we were determined, *coute qui coute*.

Having come to this laudable determination, the whole party proceeded at once to the entrance of the hostelry. There, however, all was dark, save a lamp which burned dimly in the foreground, and which we should have decidedly demolished, out of sheer vexation at finding the house shut up, had it not lighted us to the front door—where, after repeated thunderings, we managed to awake an unfortunate boots, who rushed down stairs with bare feet, in his shirt. No sooner, however, had he unlocked the entrance, and peeped through the small portion of the opening of the door, than a violent push sent him headlong into the passage, and in we all rushed to pick up the wounded—the affrighted boots, however, would listen to no entreaties, or no pecuniary offers, to call up the landlord or the cook.

“No,” said he, “master and missus is

a-bed this four hours, and it is as much as my place is worth to disturb them ven vonce they is hentranced in slumber ; and as for the cook, she's terrible worked these two days past, and she sleeps like a porpoise."

In fact, no bribes, no threats, could induce this trusty slave even to ask for the keys of the bar ; and as for prevailing on him to enter the chamber of the barmaid, that was out of the question—no boots had ever dared to tread in such sacred premises.

When road-side inns were necessary conveniences for travellers in the land we live in—which railways have well nigh exterminated from the face of the earth, save at terminations—it was a pleasant sight for a tired and hungry traveller, whether on business or pleasure, to halt on his passage through the entrance, and gaze with hungry admiration at the goodly sight which presented itself through the windows of the bar—of sirloins and cold ham, pigeon-pies and fowls, rounds of beef and quarters of lamb, there set forth in appetisant order, to catch the 'siller' and subdue the

cravings of the inner man. And it was such a sight as this which presented itself, and, probably, would still call forth my admiration did chance or inclination induce me once more to visit the scene of that night's frolic.

On that occasion, so excitable did the picture of abundant eatables, thus offered to our view, and yet unattainable, prove to the senses, that the cravings of the whole party no longer admitted of control: in spite, therefore, of the earnest entreaties of the unhappy boots, a knife was at length produced, and, with this implement of war at hand, a breach was forthwith made in the stronghold, by the removal of one of the panes of glass—and, having thus effected a manual lodgment, the whole bar of delicacies were taken by a “coup de main.”

Whole barons of beef were cut down, hams demolished to the bone—such slaughter was never before seen; in fact, this supper, if not the most *recherché*, or arranged in the most complete mode of comfort and elegance, for it actually took place on the floor of the

lobby, was, nevertheless, as substantial and as merry a one as a Christmas party might desire to be entertained with; and truly must the landlord have been entranced in the arms of slumber, or some one else, for the attack being over, and the senses gratified, we managed to retreat to our quarters, leaving boots to put up with the resentment, bear the brunt of his anger, and send the bill for damages, when he could be roused.

As might have been expected, great was the wrath of the corpulent individual, when refreshed by the slumbers of the night, he came to take his morning's soother, and prepare for the duties of his calling. With open mouth and extended nostrils, — at least, so said boots, — the good man gazed on the havoc committed on his well stocked larder, which he had arranged and left in such trim and tantalizing order the night previous. Unpleasing to ears polite would be a repetition of the phraseology poured forth from angry lips on this occasion. Suffice that he uttered vows of vengeance against the whole British Army, com-

mencing with the Marshals and ending with the least of pigmy drummer boys. Courts-martial and courts of inquiry, dismissals, and coroner's inquests floated wildly in his exasperated imagination. Poor man! his temper—never a good one—was sorely tried, for in our gourmandizing we had demolished the identical leg of a turkey he had promised himself, grilled and devilled, for breakfast.

At the identical moment of this discovery boots came to our aid. Immortal boots! Pity for him that French polish was ever invented to purloin half his avocation.

"Well, Sir," he observed, "it was umpossible for to pervent it. There was four on um, and they all swore they would have summat to eat. But they said they would pay for the damage, and here 's the haddress on um."

True, we had committed an aristocratic burglary in the dead hour of night; nevertheless, reparation was offered, and all the world knows exchange is no robbery. Luckily for us, and the British Army,

which might otherwise have been deprived of our valuable services, the love of gain was a stronger passion in the landlord's heart than that of revenge. Therefore, having supplied the place of the turkey leg with sundry slices of bacon, and calmly considered the chances, he proceeded for advice to his attorney. Now this limb of the law—like many of his brother limbs—could laugh at a joke when he was paid for it, or do anything else on the same security. And to him a five pound note from the pay of a cornet was quite as acceptable as the last shilling of an unfortunate bankrupt. Moreover, Mr. Parchment was a first-rate hand at making out a Bill of Costs; and in this case clearly seeing in the distance effects to honour the draft for damages done, he first chuckled at the turkey campaign, and then proceeded to advise. The advice I shall give literally as handed to the foraging party about mid-day, as a warning to those proceeding on such nocturnal recreations, never to help themselves, unasked or unpermitted, to the

contents of another man's larder, whether publican or sinner. Far better go supperless to bed, and dream—as Boniface did beside his *cara sposa*—of broiled turkey legs for breakfast. The bill ran thus:—

To the Officers of ——— Regts., Chatham Barracks.

To Four Suppers	£1	6	0
To Porter	0	3	0
(We had a pint bottle.)			
To &c. &c.	0	6	6
Breakage and Damage	2	2	0
(One plate, one pane of glass.)			
Legal Advice	2	6	8
Remuneration to Boots	1	0	0
Disturbance in Hotel	1	0	0
	£8	4	2

There was only one item I did not regret, the pound to Boots, and with pleasure I recollect having added half-a-crown. Nevertheless, it was doubtless a cheap supper under circumstances, and well served. The old tune, "We wont go home till morning," is rather an expensive tune to the army. Nevertheless, merry cornets and ensigns, still sing it!

The morning following this untoward event I quitted Temple and his pleasant companions, and joined my own corps. I think I hear the merry laugh now ringing in my ears as I related our midnight exploit to those who lingered at the mess table that night. "Be dad," said the Major, who loved what he termed a moral frolic, "the cutting out was as well a devised attack on the larder as might be. I recollect," he added, "when I was as young as you are, Fred Western, that a brother officer and I were returning, or rather going to a party, tea and turn out, I believe; we had to pass down a narrow lane, or bye street, and as we did so, a strong light shone through a small window, which proved to be that of a larder. Now it so happened that the lady of the house, possibly bent on economy, was inspecting its contents, and at the very moment of our passing held in her one hand a candle, and in the other a dish of cold mutton. My companion, intent on fun, placed a somewhat large red face against the small window, and gave a sort of nasal

sound, which though ludicrous is beyond the power of description. But the effect it produced was instantaneous; down smashed dish and mutton, and while we retreated, so did the lady, exclaiming to the household she had seen a man in a mask. In fact, it became a nine days' wonder; we kept our counsel, however, though ever after Fitz went by the name of the man in the mask."

Those were, indeed, merry days, and truly may I add the sunshine of my life. And although that sun was about to blaze forth in more than usual brightness, it was only to be hereafter overshadowed with clouds.

One morning, as I lay rather later than usual, ruminating on my narrow camp bed, thinking how soon I could with decency apply for leave, for I longed to see Nelly and Gussy again,—moreover, the long vacation was fast approaching, and Arty would be home for the fishing,—when in bolted a brother sub, destroying in an instant my airy castles of home and its occupants. In his hand he flourished aloft the daily paper, while he exclaimed, "I'll be

hanged, Fred Western, if you're not the luckiest fellow I know; here you are, you fortunate dog, gazetted to an unattached lieutenancy," with sundry other friendly expressions; but subs are sometimes given to say bad words, so it is as well not to repeat them.

Nevertheless, all sounded pleasing to my ears on that occasion, so I replied, "Hand me my breeks," and into them I jumped in a trice, laid hold of the paper, eagerly gazed at the Gazette, and truly was I, as large as life, actually in print, "Cornet Frederick Western, to be, &c." I was then seized with sensations at this distant time utterly impossible accurately to describe. They must, however, have been somewhat similar to those experienced by the Hero of Waterloo when he first beheld the wavering forces of France give way before his glorious army, or those of a Christian pastor, who having starved for man, and worked in love for the glory of God for forty years, on a pittance, finds himself on awaking one morning translated to a bishopric, of only five thousand

per annum. What then, if the truth be told, the real exhilaration I felt was not for the "exalted rank," but the knowledge that I was free to return to Brooklands. Nevertheless, how small the Cornets appeared about midnight, when I had of course presented to the mess some dozen of bad port and worse champagne, to drink my health and future honours, and having taken more than my share, invited all my brother officers to visit Brooklands, ride my Dad's horses, shoot my Dad's game, and fish his streams. Bad port makes some men malicious, on me it had the effect of causing me to be unusually condescending and liberal; I therefore spoke largely, and thought less smally of myself than any one else, and ended by going to bed in total oblivion of the honour I had so recently attained.

In justice to myself, however, I must admit that a few days subsequently, when I shook the hand of my gallant Colonel, and bid adieu to the light hearted spirits with whom I had been associated, though only for a few brief months, I felt the tears

glisten in the eyes even of an unattached Lieutenant, and I quitted them with many sincere feelings of regret. This fine regiment went shortly after to India, and there added numerous honourable insignia to banners already well nigh covered with Peninsular honours. Had I gone with it, the public of course might have suffered by the loss of these most interesting pages. As may be imagined, I lost little time ere I joined the Brooklands circle. But alas! even in the very midst of life's sunshine, clouds often occur to overcast the brightest horizon, to mar the brightest hopes, and so was it with me. From the very hour that I appeared to have gained almost all I then most desired in life, from that very hour—though not without brilliant returns of happiness—the sunshine of my life appeared gradually to become overcast. The sun, in fact, was sinking till it set; I had then health, a deeply loved and loving home circle, friends—how many and how true!—prospects of the brightest, fortune, and above all, that bright star which

leads man to energy and honour—the single-hearted, pure, and undivided love of a heart as youthful as my own. A few short years—how few I scarce dare say—all these blessings were gone, save the love of that gentle being. Ought I not to be grateful for that?

Alas! why will memory ever dwell so faithfully on the records of blighted hopes, rather than days of happiness—but so is it, and, spite of man's efforts, the time will come, sooner or later, to all, when sorrow will enter the heart that once knew nought but joy. And when it does come, may he be found clinging to the firm hope of a Christian—the only hope which never deceiveth. On my arrival in London, where I halted for a day, on my way to the Old Hall at home, I received a letter from dear Gussy; I really felt some reluctance to open it, inasmuch as it was written on black-edged paper, and sealed with a large black seal. I did at last muster sufficient courage to break the seal, when the contents indeed were painful, I had lost a brother and a friend—my







elder brother was suddenly cut off, in the midst of life's vigour, by fever. While poor Selwyn, alone, with none, save foreign hands, to administer to his last wants, in a small and distant Italian town, had succumbed to a broken heart.

I was the heir of Brooklands—what then, clouds had already begun to roll over the sunshine of my life. Poor Selwyn had left legacies to Gussy, as to myself and brother, while my father was appointed his executor. But when the Lodge passed by entail into other hands, which it did, there was little remaining to pay them. His memory, however, was engraved on the hearts of those who had loved him in life, and we sought no more.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUNSET.

SOME few months had elapsed subsequent to these painful events, when, one intense hot morning of July, as I sat by the open window of the dining-room, which looked over the beautiful park of Brooklands, fancying the desecration which would be caused by the passing of a railway, awaiting for Gussy to make breakfast, that she joined me, attired in deep mourning, but with her usual elegance and neatness, the dark habiliments setting off her graceful figure to advantage.

“Well, Gussy, darling,” I observed, as she entered, “make haste, and give us some breakfast, and then come and idle away an hour beneath your favourite cedar tree.”

As we sat, talking over a variety of matters uninteresting to those beyond the family circle, a letter from the bag, which had arrived unusually late that morning, was handed to me, having broken the seal of which, I discovered it to be from Temple, and ran thus :—

“DEAR FRED,—I am about to join my regiment in the Ionian Isles, and more, have obtained leave to proceed there *via* France and Italy. What say you to a Continental trip ; I should be heartily glad of your companionship—more, it will do you good. So, tell Nelly and Gussy, I insist on their resigning you, for at least six months—only fancy, a visit to those isles of Greece ; and, moreover, I am told there is first-rate cock-shooting in Albania—and who knows, we may have a wild boar hunt by way of variation.

“Give my love to the dear ones at the old Hall at home, as you term them ; and say you come—I shall take no denial,

“Yours,

“CYRIL TEMPLE.”

“What say you, dear Gus,” I observed, after reading Temple’s letter, “shall I go? I am not a first-rate hand at fishing—besides, the weather is against it; Dad is beginning to think of nothing but railway speculations; and I should much like to visit the East, particularly so with Temple. My present position permits of six months’ travelling, and when I return Nell and you will look on me as a novel importation, and treat me with all due warmth and respect.”

“Fred, Fred, dear brother mine, I have often thought of late that the current of our lives has passed too happily, and alas! too rapidly to continue in such unbroken peace as has hitherto been our lot. We have now lost dear ---, as also our friend Selwyn, and are less able to spare those who remain to us; but I think, with you, dear Fred, that a visit to foreign lands will only cause you to return, more gratefully appreciating your own—so we must even spare you for a time, if go you will.”

“Thanks, thanks, dear Gussy—and, if I do go, fully does my heart assure me, those

at home which love me now will only beat more fondly in my absence."

"Be assured they will, Fred ; if not, would they be worthy of regret?"

Alas ! dear Gussy said truly, our cup had been too full of joy. Happy days of early manhood, or more properly speaking, boyhood, when sorrow interferes not with the events of each passing day, or on whose future, whenever the mind dares to speculate, the caution seldom dwells beyond the hour. Oh ! joyous season of youth, whose highest anticipations are in the hunting-field or the ball-room. Who can then believe, or who will believe, that the time will come when such joys will be as nothing ; but that the mind, creating for itself a world within more attractive than the external, the present shall display in vain its attractions against the interest the past affords, and the hope which the future holds forth.

"I shall ride over to G——, and ask Mac's opinion on the subject, Gussy ; he was telling me a few days since, that he hoped I should get on full pay immediately, adding, in his

usual quaint manner, that he considered it mere waste of life, to remain here, fishing and shooting rabbits; and making love in shady groves, by rippling streams, like those of Brooklands, to pretty girls, with such prospects as I have of rising in my profession. However, this Continental tour may find favour in his eyes—and, to do him justice, he is a warm-hearted, high-minded man, who has been cruelly neglected.”

“Go, by all means,” said Gussy, laughing, “his advice appears to be admirable.”

Now, I must beg leave to “try back,” in sporting terms, for a moment, while I name, that there happened to be residing in the city, to which I have more than once alluded, a most amiable Irish gentleman, and a most gallant and warm-hearted officer—towards him, as boys (as in after life we retained it), we had formed, and with reason, a great personal regard; and, while on the one hand we valued his opinion on all matters connected with the army, we appealed to it not seldom on various other matters, never tired of listening to the varied anec-

dotes of his military career, for he was a Peninsular hero; he was ever a welcome visitor at Brooklands, where his quiet, unaffected, yet quaint humour, had also justly made him a general favourite. Into his humble, yet delightfully arranged little bachelor snugery I was ushered, soon after mid-day, on that hot morning of our conference under the cedar tree—he was sitting at an open window, in airy attire, with a meerchaum, which he was smoking, in one hand, and a newspaper in the other. Without giving him time to welcome me, I exclaimed, “By St. Hubert, Mac, give me a quart of porter, or a gallon of ale, or a bottle of Herefordshire cider, which I prefer to either this hot weather, or I shall be choked with the dust, or expire at your feet.”

“Faith, then you shall have all three,” he replied, “with a little patience, rather than choke or expire under my roof. But what brought you, my dear lad, this unusually broiling morning ten miles over a dusty road—could not ‘Jeames’ or the mail have brought your commands. Come, sit down,

make yourself aisy, awaiting the drinkables; no scrape, no love affairs, no devilry, in the wind, aye, Fred?" And thus he good-humouredly run on.

In the meantime, his trusty housekeeper entered with a liberal supply of both eatables and drinkables; and, having "squenched" my thirst, as the good woman termed it, I handed Mac, Cyril Temple's letter, and requested his advice on the subject of my travels.

"Go, by all means, my dear boy," he exclaimed, after a little consideration, "and the sooner the better, instead of idling away your time in the presence of golden locks and neat ankles. And, mark me, Fred, when you come back, let your old friend, Mac, have the pleasure of knowing that your travels have been profitable as well as pleasurable. I shall expect to hear of foreign armies as well as foreign habits—learn something from the former, and do not return overpowered by the latter."

Mac decided my plans ere I quitted him, which was not till the moon had risen high

in the heavens that glorious summer night, and the following week Temple and I had arrived at St. Omer. We had determined to remain a few days at this otherwise not very interesting locality, inasmuch as a military encampment was then and there formed, and I must admit, that the hope of seeing so large a body of foreign troops offered a great attraction.

From St. Omer we had determined to proceed to Paris—remain there a fortnight, and thence travel *via* Geneva and Lausanne to Bern. On leaving Bern, we proposed to pass over the Simplon to Milan; for had not Napoleon I. done the same, after making a good road, for which we felt exceedingly obliged to him. And then, having visited Bologna, city of museums and sausages, our next line was to Parma, in order that we might tomhé, as the French express themselves, on Ancona. Arrived there, in a steamboat, trabaculo, or in any other vessel about to start, we hoped to make a speedy and safe passage to the Ionian islands.

On arriving at St. Omer, we counted the

joint funds with which we had provided ourselves, which amounted to £264. 11s 6d. We deducted the time which had already expired of Temple's leave of absence, and there remained exactly eighty-four days and one night ere he would be required to present himself at the head-quarters of his regiment, then at Corfu; consequently, we had abundance of time, a good supply of cash, fine weather, and tolerable health—what could we desire more. Why simply to enjoy ourselves to the utmost, expend all our money, and all Temple's leave, merely arriving at the station of his splendid corps on the precise day, not an hour sooner, and for all we cared to the contrary without a shilling remaining; in fact, at the very season when Corfu is most delightful—the latter end of October.

Fatigued with the excitement of the few previous days, to say nothing of the novelty of my arrival once more in "La Belle France," the sun had already risen far above the horizon ere refreshed by the sound sleep I had enjoyed, at the Hotel de l'Aigle,

at St. Omer's, I was roused to the pleasures of another day by the crash of some score of brass drums, softened by the bugle's accompaniment, which led the advance of a smart infantry regiment of the line, which was marching to form one of the reserve battalions in the intended display of the military camp stationed in the neighbourhood.

The first sound of this martial music was quite sufficient to dispel all other thoughts, and I threw aside the windows; the baton of the tall and handsome Tambour-majeur, well-nigh breaking the head which I had thrust forth in eager and joyous anticipation of the advancing column; but when I saw it fall once more from its airy elevation to be lightly caught by the hand, which again and again with surprising dexterity cast it in mid-air, till the brazen head glittered in the sun's rays—the bearded and moustached soldier with decorated breast marching forward with unbroken pace to the well ordered time of the drums, which only ceased to give way to the more enlivening strains of the fine

band—as if the very ground he trod upon was honoured by his footsteps. I felt truly I was in the land of the soldier, and lost not a moment either in unnecessary adornment of my person, or in despatching the excellent breakfast which awaited us in the saloon below.

About a league in distance from the quiet town of St. Omer, in a fine open and well-adapted country, over which in one of its most splendid garbs of blue, hung the brightest of summer's skies, I beheld a scene which to none could be void of deep interest—but to two young soldiers who had heard of war's alarms, yet only practically knew the duties of peace; it was, indeed, one of unusual excitement and gratification. Along the side and on the platform of a fine grassy plain were scattered numberless small tents and cantonments, some erected in their simple white canvass, others built up with turf and stones at hand, before several of which even little garden plots were laid out, as if they had been pitched for the permanent instead of the temporay dwelling places of

the soldier. Here and there various battalions of infantry were forming in preparation for the coming field day, cavalry corps of every description, from the cuirassier with glittering breast-plates to the gay hussar, lancer, and light dragoons, were standing bridle in hand and ready to mount—artillery were limbered up. The bugle ever and anon sounded sharply across the wide plain; aides-de-camp and generals, orderlies and strangers galloped about the field in all directions; in truth, the scene was one of increasing interest and animation. There are few troops in the world which can surpass, if equal our own cavalry, while no foreign infantry has ere met face to face with our gallant infantry without practical proof of their consummate bravery. Nevertheless, I must admit that the foreign troops which I beheld during my travels with Temple, had a military bearing and a martial chivalrous appearance, tending, at least as regards the French, to make them what they really are—one of the finest armies in the world.

There are possibly few among those who are justly termed the educated class, who have not in these days of cheap and rapid transit visited the beautiful city of Paris, and so many who have a perfect theoretical knowledge of its charms from other means, that I shall intrude but lightly my opinions or feelings in reference to that truly interesting capital ; nor shall I endeavour to place before them the looking-glass in which I viewed it during the fortnight we remained there. In which brief time, nevertheless, we managed to spend double the sum that it was necessary to spend—delivered our letters of introduction at the Embassy and elsewhere. And I can affirm to the excellency of his Excellency's cuisine—increased our baggage by sundry absurdities purchased in the Palais Royale—and in fact, enjoyed numerous delights in the way of operas, theatres, and sight-seeings, which those who have time and money at command, generally do contrive to enjoy. One thing I avoided, and I have never regretted it—which was the entering of a gambling house—inasmuch, as I

confess to having no enjoyment or curiosity in witnessing the painful effects of the worst of passions on my fellow men.

That I was a tolerable linguist, I had in a great measure to thank the Quequovillier girls, whom we rather condemned ourselves for not visiting *en route*. But if the truth be told, we had I fancy, both left feelings in the Vale of Berkeley, which scarcely admitted of fresh flirtations. Strange, however, and he always confessed it with admirable humour, Temple invariably felt dislike to foreign languages—and it therefore generally fell to my lot to be alike spokesman and interpreter — while he, dear fellow, with innumerable good qualities, had rather an absurd one, and not always agreeable; simply that, while acknowledging my services both as regards French and Italian, he occasionally disputed the correctness of my phraseology, though unwilling to exert himself; it was equally so in reference to the habits and customs of the people through whose territories we journeyed. However, these little differences were mere pleasing

varieties to the even tenour of our firm friendship.

On one occasion having tried the cuisine enjoyments of Verey's, and the Rocher de Cancale, we decided on visiting Beauvillier's, then in the height of fame, with the laudable intent of ascertaining what is termed a good French dinner; in fact, to tempt the appetite by expensive and unnecessary luxuries—as if we really had not been practising a similar system from the period of our landing on the shores of France.

On arriving at this celebrated restaurateur's, I merely suggested that a dinner at ten francs a-head for two persons would probably secure to us a most reasonable acquaintance with Beauvillier's culinary artiste, and afford ample satisfaction to the most extensive cravings of appetite. This suggestion on my part, however, Temple at once declined.

“Ten francs a head in such a place as this! why, the sum is not sufficient for a ‘befstick,’ as they call it—pray do not insult them by such an offer. At a table-d'hôte, a few francs may be all very well, where

there are many diners and all the scraps of the week are served up in soup, renewed ragouts, and inconceivable messes, but at Beauvilliers these matters are doubtless better understood; so pray direct them, that's a good fellow, to serve a rare dinner without limit as to price."

To this I consented—the good dinner was ordered, the what left to the discretion of the Maitré d'Hotel—Champagne put in ice—Chateau Margeau and Lafitte uncorked—and we awaited to commence operations. The utter impossibility, however, of eating or even tasting one-third of the dishes provided, was totally out of the question—and ere the sixth was set before us, we cried, "Halt, enough!" In fact, had all the dainties in Paris been offered for our approval, it would have been beyond the power of man to do more than we did, with hands, and eyes so well employed, inasmuch as the table we had selected being flanked by two others, they were shortly occupied by several most interesting neighbours. At the one sat an old moustached French officer, whose coat was

decorated with the cordon of the Legion d'Honneur, as also a most lovely girl; and opposite to him a well dressed woman of middle age, who doubtless was her mother; and at the other table, a fat and placid-looking female, in company with a skeleton of a man, who might have been an attorney, or any similar calling. At all events, his appearance would have led one to believe he was fit for anything save obtaining the means, of satisfying his cormorant wife—*forsooth*, I fancied my Piedmontese friend of former years had appeared on the gastronomic stage—not in a different character—but altered as to person. By the powers, how she feasted! But our dinner is served.

“Potage au ris?” said the waiter.

“D—— your distillation of rice-water,” added Temple—“glass of Champagne, Fred, with pleasure—not so bad, is it? excellent and well iced.”

“Sole a la Normandie, coutelettes de saumon,” reiterated the garçon.

“Good,” repeated Temple.

At this critical moment the commandant,

for such I concluded him to be, to whom I have already alluded—accompanied by his wife and fair daughter, entered. The young lady deliberately took off an elegant pink bonnet, and displayed a pale but most speaking countenance, the features of which were exquisitely delicate. She then seated herself at the table of this public room, with all the ease and composure of one joining the dinner party of an ambassador, and as she had ever been accustomed to such well bred society. The good lady, her mother, followed her example, and Monsieur le Pere stroked his moustache and took up the bill of fare. At him, however, I neither looked or desired to see more than his back, which was turned towards us; the pretty daughter, however, had the good taste and courtesy to permit us a full view of her interesting face, far more to our taste than all the delicacies Beauvillier's could offer.

“Vol au vent à la financier, poulet aux truffes,” again uttered the attendant.

I was about to make a culinary incision into the former, when the party arrived on

our left. Down sat Madame, some thirteen stone ten of human flesh ; doubtless with the same courteous intention as our pretty neighbour on the right, permitting us an admirable sight of her enormous physiognomy. Not like the young girl, however, did she take off her bonnet ; but placing it more firmly on her head with one hand—as if the arduous duties she was about to undertake required some degree of preparation, like a man who buttons up his coat in a hailstorm—with the other she tightly fixed her napkin under her chin, and then, with a glance of defiance round the well filled apartment, she dashed the ladle into the smoking purée, and commenced her feast like a hungry hound returned from a hard day's hunting. What were the proceedings of her cher moitié ? In this case, by the bye, scarcely a third, it was impossible to discover, as my eyes were better employed in admiring the fair girl, and disgust at the fat old woman.

Bifstick à l'Anglais, and gigot de mouton were then placed on the table ; but we had

already succumbed both to the quantity and quality which had previously been served.

"Deuce take the beef and mutton ; I am done up," said my friend of unlimited desires, "pray let us have some strong coffee, and a glass of Curacoa, and for pity's sake beg them to take away these lumps of meat. French fellows imagine we live on underdone joints and pudding all the year round." As for myself, I had long since dined, so I gladly consented to relinquish the remaining half score of dishes which otherwise would have been tendered for our approval, and for which we had of course to pay. As we sipped our coffee, the question of who and what might be the calling of our neighbours naturally became the subject of our conversation. In order, however, to make the matter more clear, I shall give the conversation which actually passed :

"The fair girl on your right," said Temple, "charming as she appears, is doubtless just let loose from a French finishing school or a convent, to be married with or without her consent to the first man who can prove he

possesses the enormous income of cinq milles livres de rent, about the pay of an Infantry Captain. Her respectable Papa appears to be an old soldier, and may have seen some service with the Emperor, as he is decorated. Nevertheless, since that illustrious chief sailed for St. Helena the red ribbon means little or nothing; so, after all, he may possibly be only a Garde Nationale, or a dancing master. Yet he is decidedly a fine looking old man, and his daughter appears a well-bred lady. The Mama, if such she be, is an impossibility; put her into a sack, and she may be drawn out a washerwoman or a Countess. All French women dress well."

"As for the other party—the man is a lawyer or a money-lender; the wife superlatively vulgar, and a most unnatural gourmandiser. That I am correct on most points, I will bet you a five franc piece against your opinion; so let me have it."

"Agreed."

"With regard to the persons on our left, I own I am much of your way of thinking; yet it is somewhat difficult to decide as to the man—he may be anything; and as for

the woman—thank God, it is not my duty to cater for her enormous appetite!—she has already consumed enough for ten, and yet works on with undiminished ardour. With reference to the party on our right, there can be no question as to the papa being a military man, probably an officer of rank, a peer of France, and a gentleman; and the daughter is as beautiful as she is elegant, of that there can be still less question. The mother is so quiet and unassuming, that I decide at once that she is a fit wife of such a man, and honoured by having such a daughter.”

While we thus chatted on the trio, much to our mortification, rose the lovely girl; replaced her pink bonnet on her well-formed head, and hid a very pretty pair of ears, which I have ever considered a beauty in women, and they quietly departed. As they left the room, however, the young lady turned round and gladdened us with such a bright look, that we decided at once on making further inquiries. Having come to this conclusion, I demanded our bill. The

result was by no means so large as I expected, being only thirty-five francs; having therefore generously handed two Napoleons to the waiter, who, doubtless, while grinning and bowing, fully believed in the old adage, "that fools and their money are soon parted," I beckoned him out of the room, and questioned him as to our opinions, to which he readily replied.

"The Chevalier," said he, "is an ancien Capitaine of the 61st Regt. of the Line, with Madame *son épouse* and Mademoiselle *sa fille*. They leave Paris for Rouen to-night, where his regiment is quartered. The other party are Monsieur Lebec, of the Rue St. Esprit, epicier, and Madame Lebec."

We were satisfied, and disappointed as all must be who attempt to decide as to the character and positions of those assembled in the public room of a *Restaurante*; and having looked in at the *Variété*, for an hour, we went home, to dream of the Capitaine's fair daughter, and prepare ourselves by rest for a start on the morrow.

I have dwelt possibly at too great length

on this trifling anecdote of sensual indulgence, at the prince of Parisian restaurants ; my object has this end, however—to describe what actually there took place, and to speak for once, instead of repeating similar details of persons and feelings, which probably, nine times in ten, may be witnessed and felt by those who visit similar places for similar purposes ; but the more so, in order to suggest that when travelling abroad, as we did, and wishing to secure a good French dinner, the sum of five francs a-head will generally answer the purpose, if left to the discretion of the restaurante, as well as did the sum we thus lavishly expended ; and the price, as well as the selection, of wine is no difficult matter, from the numerous printed documents which lay on every table and line the public room of every hotel in France.

Once more, however, we march forward. Having been particularly well jumbled and sufficiently wearied by the public vehicle and its motions, in which we had journeyed from St. Omer to Paris, we determined to proceed to Bern *en poste*. True, the outlay was

considerably increased thereby, but the comfort and freedom from all restraint we experienced, on the other hand, was most agreeable. Were I to detail, however, all the pleasurable sensations we enjoyed in the contemplation of nature's varied beauties, and other sources of interest which so continually occurred during our travels on the continent, these pages would become rather a foreign tour, than what they are really intended to be; I shall, therefore, merely halt here and there, in brief explanation, as I have already stated, for the information of those who like myself, and for similar purposes, may be disposed to travel over the same ground.

We bivouacked, therefore, but not under canvas, for one day only at the Hotel Secheron, situated on the borders of the lovely Lake Lemman, near Geneva; and on the splendid promenade at Lausanne, lingered in delight over the beauties of the prospect seen therefrom, which has ever appeared to me as one of the most splendid and interesting in Europe. The rich and vine-covered valley,

which at the moment was about to yield its treasures to the wine-press, lay before us in its varied luxuriance of fruit and foliage. The calm blue lake beyond it, and the snow-clad summits of the Alps reflecting their dark outlines on the calm waters at their base, in which the towering height of Mont Blanc was most distinctly pre-eminent, all combining to form a picture of loveliness which if equalled could scarcely be surpassed.

“ We may resume

The march of our existence : and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Lemman ! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much that may give us praise if pondered fittingly.”

BYRON.

From Lausanne, where we had briefly halted in order to visit the military institution from which the officers of the Swiss Guard in the service of France had formerly been selected ; and which I have reason to believe is still kept up in the same admirable state of discipline in which it was our good fortune then to find it, we deviated from the

usual route to Italy, in order to visit Bern, from whence we proceeded over the Simplon, or rather walked by the side of the straining steeds which drew up our light calèche. What numerous contending feelings and interesting thoughts to a military man does that route convey to the mind ! There the master-mind of one of the greatest warriors of modern ages had planned that extraordinary work, which his adoring army so speedily carried out, thereby enabling him to pour his victorious legions into the rich plains of Italy. There, as we halted on the wild summit of the mountain to change our weary horses, and refresh ourselves with trout from the neighbouring streams, I almost wished that I had lived in earlier days, were it only to have partaken in the glories of that army which drove from the extremity of Portugal, across the mighty Pyrenees, those splendid troops, which, in the land of our travels had been stopped in their victorious career by neither man nor mountain. Alas ! that the living eagle, perched on the craggy rocks above our

heads, should have recalled so painfully the man, whose golden emblems which glittered valiantly in so many well-fought fields, had at length, by a more mighty if not more splendid army than his own, been sent from their place of majesty, to exist only in the memory of the world !*

But we are at Milan, which to me has ever been a favourite abiding place, at least for a season ; and on this occasion I felt never weary of witnessing the manœuvres of the Austrian troops, as admiring both without and within the noble Duomo, or in passing my evenings at the Scala. At this city I first experienced the gratification of beholding a battalion of Austrian infantry, as also the inspection of a cavalry regiment ; and I must again admit the feeling which so forcibly struck me in France, viz., that their soldier-like appearance caused to the mind and heart a sensation of martial excitement which is ever wanting when beholding the parade of one of our own regiments of the Line. The costume of the several

* Since restored to the army by Louis Napoleon.

corps then in garrison at Milan was by no means prepossessing at first sight. The white coat with chocolate facings conveyed singly almost a feeling of ridicule ; but on better acquaintance, and after seeing a regiment in line, the effect was most pleasing. I am most fully aware that the colour of the cloth would be totally inconsistent as regards English troops ; and to deprive us of our national colour would be totally out of the question ; moreover, in our climate, and under every circumstance, white would be an expensive impracticability. Nevertheless, the Austrian troops were particularly well dressed ; and the sight of an Austrian grenadier, with his bearskin, moustache, and well made white coat, is pleasing to a military eye ; and I am not aware that this white costume has ever evinced too much of the white feather.

We had determined not to delay beyond a week our sojourn at Milan. In the first place, time flew rapidly ; moreover, like many other young men similarly situated, we had been lavish in our expenditure ; not from a mere habit of expense, but simply

that we had then scarcely learned the intrinsic value of money, and its extraordinary powers for good and evil. Alas ! that this power should ever predominate in the latter sense. However, we felt that our funds were large on starting, and that it was necessary to see everything, good, bad, and indifferent ; and this much I have never regretted, though in many cases we doubtless expended double the sum absolutely required to obtain our ends, which fact a more prudent tourist would soon have discovered ; indeed, it must be admitted, we acted with no feeling whatever of self-denial. A trifling but, nevertheless, ludicrous event however occurred, which not only well nigh put an end to all my anxious anticipations, but also caused a considerable delay in our forward march. I cannot at the moment call to mind, whether it was the fatigue consequent on constant travelling, and its exciting causes ; or the liberties I had taken with a somewhat delicate constitution ; or the transmogrification of the cuisine, which the passing of the mighty Simplon had con-

verted from butter in most things into oil in everything ; or my weakness for the splendid grapes ever at hand both within doors and without,—which, however, compels me to admit, that for days I had experienced an all-overishness difficult to account for, terminating nevertheless in a sharp attack of bilious fever : and as from youth upwards, I have ever experienced a decided disinclination to call in a medical adviser, however much I may admire the profession and its talented members, my case became somewhat serious. Still I urged Temple, who was rather alarmed at the thought of being left alone beyond the Alps, to make himself easy, and simply to endeavour to find out an apothecary's shop, in which he could purchase sundry ounces of Epsom salts or a few black draughts, an infallible stomachic remedy from ten years of age to five-and-twenty ; after which period of life, these cures, on the system of killing, having succeeded in ruining the inward man, a totally different treatment is required ; not to cure the complaint under which you labour, but the

effects of the system you have been previously following. To a man, however, who knew little of the French language, and not two words of Italian, and, moreover, from his having entered the service at seventeen, could scarcely be expected to be well read in the classics, the finding of a druggist's shop was a far more easy matter than that of explaining his desires to the owner. Therefore, while I lay feverish and suffering in bed, the following conversation, as subsequently related to me, took place beyond my hearing in the depository of drugs, from whence the leech, probably by sign manual, was at length induced to visit the hotel, and present himself in the chamber of my torments.

Having entered the shop, my anxious friend commenced with "Bon jour, Monsieur," saluting an individual resembling greatly the portrait of the apothecary in the days of Romeo and Juliet; "bon jour, avez-vous du salts or du sennar?"

The druggist bowed to him in return with the greatest politeness, but, as might be ex-

pected, stared with astonishment. Temple, nothing daunted, proceeded—"I say, Monsieur, avez-vous salso, rubarbe, or senero?" all to no purpose, he failed again; and, having once heard some person say, that in order to make himself thoroughly understood in Italian, it was only necessary to add a vowel to the end of every French word, he commenced on another tack—"Mone amio beauceapo maladeo."

"Oh! bene Signor, -I now understand, you feel ill, very ill; allow me to touch your pulse, permit me to observe your tongue."

"Confound the fellow," he exclaimed; "me unwell—no, no. Amiso, malado."

Suffice, that this absurd conversation lasted some time; when, at length, either by signs, threats, kicks, or what not, for I never clearly discovered, friend and apothecary made their appearance—and, having gone through some necessary formalities, by the aid of the little Italian I was then master of, I contrived to explain the nature of my sufferings; and, having politely retired, in the course of an hour he re-appeared, with sundry bottles, as

also some nice-looking circular-formed sweetmeats, at least such I imagined them to be, and which, of course, I attributed to his kindness, as a remedy for the nauseous effects of the liquid medicine so abundantly provided. Not a bit of it; these nice-looking cakes proved nothing more or less than a species of horizontal bolus, which it was absolutely necessary, by some means or other, I should force down my throat. Having endeavoured to follow the advice thus proposed, which my increasing indisposition made the more desirable, I received from the hands of my medical adviser one of the aforesaid apparent sweetmeats, which appeared to be enclosed in a thin white substance, which, in my ignorance, I naturally concluded to be silver paper. When endeavouring to remove this outward wrapper, however, I was very soon undeceived by the leech's sudden exclamations of horror.

"Remove the consecrated wafer," said he, holding back the hand already near my lips, "and the remedy will prove totally ineffectual."

This was another cause of surprise ; nevertheless, after some difficulty and grimaces, down went the whole, cross and all. But whether it was the horrid mixture, or the holy wafer in which it was carefully concealed, at this distant time it would be difficult to explain, enough that the effect, acting on the principle of kill or cure, was overpowering—indeed, for several days I was absolutely too feeble to walk across the apartment, but debility at length gave way to nutritives and restoratives ; and, having in the meantime ascertained that a grand review was about to take place, we hired an open carriage and joined in the throng, eager to enjoy a military spectacle—which proved of so highly an interesting nature, that I really rejoiced in the agonies I had suffered for the pleasure which the consequent delay at Milan had secured to me.

Bologna, city of untiring interest, the time was too brief that I passed amid thy palaces and sausages, inasmuch that I felt it incumbent to push on for Ancona, where circumstances might cause still further delay,

while awaiting a passage to Corfu. Ancona is a town which offers little interest to the tourist, perhaps, still less to the military traveller; the troops I saw there certainly tended rather to diminish than increase my estimation of foreign armies—I will, therefore, pass on to other matters. Having taken up our quarters at a tolerable hotel, our first visit was to the harbour, in the hope of discovering some vessel bound for the Ionian Isles, and in this hope fortune appeared at the onset most singularly to favour us, inasmuch as we speedily ascertained that a barque, or small decked vessel, termed a trabaculo, then taking in cargo, was about to sail immediately for Corfu and Zante. It is true that she offered accommodation of the most odious description, the cabin was small and ill-ventilated, and the odour of garlic therein poisonous; but I was young, and easily pleased, and anxious to reach Corfu; moreover, the Capitano assured us the passage would be brief, and the weather at the moment was such as to preclude the fear of much under-deck work, in the climate

of Italy—added to which, his terms were moderate, and we had, of course, permission to cater for ourselves, in the way of edibles, for what we considered would be a fair-weather sail of three or four days at the utmost. Without further consideration, therefore, we came at once to a bargain; and, this matter being settled, and our address given, in order that we might be duly warned for embarkation, we quietly awaited the result. We had as yet to learn, however, that when the bright blue sky, which reflects its cobalt-hue on the waters of the Adriatic, becomes overcast, the rain descending therefrom is rather a deluge than a refreshing shower, and the winds which blow on such occasions, through valley and o'er mountains, are as furious as a hungry tiger. The day subsequent to our arrival, however, we were favoured with a specimen never to be forgotten, which shook the houses of Ancona from foundation to roof, shivering the chimney-pots in all directions, and scattering the shipping, if it may so be termed, in the harbour, like corks, which, of course, at

once precluded the possibility of our starting. At all times, save to admire it from the shore, when during summer or winter alike it is ever-changing and beautiful, I confess my great dislike to the sea, although I can readily appreciate and understand the exhilarating effect to him who stands on the quarter-deck of a frigate, as her commander, when the noble vessel dashes before a stiff breeze. The horrors, therefore, I thus escaped of being cooped up in a vile, offensive boat during such weather as it subsequently turned out, we should have had to endure for three weeks, was a matter of no little satisfaction. The captain, nevertheless, determined to weigh anchor the moment the wind abated, and we had then nothing but to resign ourselves to our fate. It is truly said, however, that it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and in this instance the truth was fully exemplified in our case; for, as I reposed in bed, unable to sleep from the noise of the howling winds without, day-break once more appeared, and at the same moment the hotel waiter entered my apartment, as I naturally

concluded, all being then more calm, to apprise me that the hour of my misery was at hand ; but no, my lucky star shone brightly in the ascendant, the steamer had unexpectedly arrived from the Islands during the night, whence she was almost immediately to return. This was, indeed, a matter of unlooked-for joy—to be steamed in certainty, as to time, up the Adriatic, instead of submitting to the mercies of wind and weather in a frail trabaculo ! But the bargain with the captain—it was honourably made, and must be honourably fulfilled, so far as the payment was concerned. However, we had both soon risen, and were dressed, and, having already become known to the Consul, we decided on requesting his good offices, which he most readily and courteously granted—indeed, he kindly offered his aid to effect an amicable arrangement with the worthy captain, and which he did so effectually, that, having handed over to him half the amount agreed on for our passage, he left us free to make another bargain with the captain of the steamer.

Our brief passage of fifty-two hours from Ancona to Corfu, was by no means wanting in interest: the weather, although considerably abated as to wind, was, notwithstanding, far from being in its usual state of placid calm and sunshine, and the recent storm had left its grumbling effects in the way of an occasional outpouring of thunder, which sounded through the distant mountains like repeated discharges of artillery—and as, during the dark night, we walked the deck, for it was sultry and oppressive below, the flashes of lightning ever and anon were so vivid, that a pin might have been clearly seen on the deck. Our passage, however, all things considered, was far from disagreeable; and, as we had premised and intended, we landed on the quay at Corfu one brilliant afternoon in the month of October, 18—, after one of the most delightful journeys, of well-nigh three months' duration, as we could have dared to hope, much less expect so successfully to accomplish. Would that all things in life could thus be so pleasantly attained, and the balance of joy remain so greatly in

our favour. One thing I fully anticipated most decidedly occurred to the very letter, viz., that, on deducting the account of funds in hand, on landing, from the sum total with which we had started from Calais, there remained to be expended exactly 8*s.* 8*d.*, or two dollars; enough, it is true, but with little overplus, to defray the expenses consequent on the removal of ourselves and baggage from the deck of the steamer to the hotel.

CHAPTER X.

It would be almost impossible to convey to other minds than those who have enjoyed it, the beauty of the scene which presented itself, as on a bright, clear, and beautiful autumnal afternoon we steamed, or more properly speaking, glided into the harbour or roads of Corfu, formed by the adjacent small island of Vido and the mainland; the former being a spot well known to the sub-alterns of every regiment which has from time to time been quartered in the Ionian Isles. To our left, the wild range of snow-clad Morean Mountains glittering in the last rays of the setting sun, formed an outline of no common beauty; to which

may be added the dark blue expanse of the heavens above us, which appeared to reflect a similar hue on the placid deep, through which almost silently we approached the long-desired haven. In our front stood, in a commanding position, the palace of the Lord High Commissioner, every window of which facing the calm sea, blazed forth the sparkling rays of the golden sun, causing it to appear as if the whole edifice had been lighted up for some gala day; and on our right, the small rocky island before named, on which then stood a wooden barrack, alike the abode of the rat and the subaltern there detached on duty, seemed to float in the centre of the bay as if nature had there placed it, in its rocky nakedness, to protect the parent island, and throw out the wooded beauties beyond it in more varied luxuriance. This was the scene—and a lovely one it was—which greeted our anxious expectations on our near approach to Corfu. And although I had previously seen the beautiful Bay of Dublin, and subsequently the still more beauteous Bay of Naples, and heard

both these lovely views mentioned in picturesque advantages as compared with that of Corfu, I must declare, that although a similarity may exist, like that between two persons, which can no longer be admitted in each other's presence—that they all have beauties in their several ways, which beheld singly appear as unsurpassed.

The vessel had scarcely taken up her berth at one of the buoys floating in the harbour, ere we secured a boat, of which some score were immediately alongside; and having with some difficulty, amidst the incessant jabbering around us, contrived at length to take leave of the illustrious Capitano, our companion of the last three days, and leaving him in the midst of his everlasting garlicky effluvia, which no sea-air in the world could remove, with an anxious heart I prepared to meet those with whom I subsequently resided, on most friendly terms.

First introductions—the first mess dinner at Temple's head quarters; first impressions—the intense headache with which I arose

on the following morning, the unsuccessful attempts I made at a cold woodcock-pie for breakfast — the accumulation of by-gone events and future anticipations, and last though not least, the kind and courteous welcome I received from all, I shall leave to the imagination of those who have gone through the same pleasant ordeal: to those who have not, I say in the words of Boz, "Was the boys sorry, or was the boys glad?" in the latter they have my feelings. Three weeks had now elapsed since Temple had become actually associated in the pleasures and duties of his regiment, when, in accordance with the lot of the roster, he found himself on guard at what is termed the Sally-Port Gate. Within hail of the sentry who paced in front of his guard room, was a large stone; why or wherefore so placed, or by whom, it is, and possibly ever will be, an unimportant matter to explain; probably, however, it was there deposited by some geni for the especial comfort of subalterns on guard, as are the stupendous masses at Stonehenge supposed to be, for

the gratification and amusement of the curious, for I never heard of any just reason to the contrary; nevertheless, there was, doubtless now is, the friendly stone; and when the weather was sunny in winter, and not too oppressive in summer, a stranger might chance to pass there one hundred times during the day, and as surely the officer on guard would thereon be seated with a cigar in his mouth as the sparks fly upwards. Now on this identical stone Temple chanced to sit, adorned in the full costume of his corps, protecting Her Majesty's subjects, and doing his own pleasure, as did others, in smoking a cigar.

The big bear-skin cap covered his head almost to the total oblivion of his features, which were somewhat small, when an unwashed, unshaven, seafaring gentleman stepped from the deck of a trabaculo, which lay immediately alongside the pier, and walked leisurely towards him, on his way to the centre of the town. As he approached more closely, however, he made a sudden halt, as Temple, in his vanity,

imagined to admire his well-appointed person; therefore, fixing the hairy cap more knowingly on his head, he endeavoured to accept the compliment with good effect. But the stranger advanced, by far too close for the mere purpose of admiration; indeed, the odious garlicky effluvia, arising from all such gentlemen, had already blended itself with the more desirable essence of his tobacco; when stretching forth a brawny palm, which at the moment Temple scarcely believed he could intend should be touched by his well-cleaned buckskin gloves, he uttered the words, "Come sta, Signor," and then went off into a long account of wind and weather, which, with the utmost difficulty, he understood, as well as the fact—for he had totally forgotten the existence of so gallant a seaman—that he was no other person than the identical captain and he the identical sub who had arranged to sail together, in good fellowship, from Ancona to Corfu. Having ascertained thus far, he invited him to enter the guard-room, drew the cork from a bottle of Guinness's stout, of

which he was nothing loth to partake; that courtesy having been accepted, he proceeded to declare, that he had put to sea the day subsequent to our departure by steam from Ancona, and had fortunately completed his voyage on that very morning. It may, therefore, be readily conceived what would have been our fate, had not good fortune come to our aid in the shape of a steamer, nearly three weeks beating about the Adriatic, with provisions provided for four days consumption, and nothing but dried fish and oil to replace them. Oh! happy escape—I could literally have hugged the dirty seaman in the very recollection of the miseries he had endured, but from which we had been so fortunately saved.

But to return to more agreeable matters. A soldier of distinguished merit held the honourable post of Lord High Commissioner, and a no less gallant officer commanded the forces, which were by no means insignificant, as consisting of the 88th, or Connaught Rangers, the 28th North Gloucestershire, several companies of Artillery, and last,

though not the least in our estimation, the Royal Fusiliers. To one who loved his profession, the sight which presented itself when this efficient and well-disciplined brigade were paraded on the esplanade at Corfu, for a field-day, was one which might well tend to increase the enthusiastic zeal of any young officer, who, if he had already witnessed the assembly of foreign troops in force, had seldom looked on, certainly never been an actor in, any greater military display of his own army, than that of seeing several dépôts or one battalion under arms: add to this, the beauty of the locale on which these military parades took place, combining, as it did, all that in nature could excite the mind with admiration. Indeed, I can conceive few pictures more pleasing to the lover of such scenes, than that which presents itself when standing on the terrace of the palace at Corfu, on a fine clear autumnal or winter's day. Before you appears a wide expanse of green and level turf, through the centre of which there ran an avenue of trees, which, ere this, must have arrived at sufficient

maturity, not only to be termed fine trees, but also to afford a most agreeable shade, during the heat of summer, to the fair idlers who enjoy this favourite out-door lounge under their friendly and wide-spreading branches. On this open space you frequently witness assembled some thousands of men of various regiments and costumes; to your left the castle, on its lofty and rocky eminence, towers o'er the deep blue sea, and seems to vie in jealousy of height with the distant Albanian mountains, which, almost eternally capped with snow, glittered in the sunshine; and the dark neighbouring wooded hills, alike in winter as in summer, looking green and leafy, from their clothing of evergreen oaks; and the picturesque town itself, and all the multitude of feelings and thoughts which fill the heart of man with interest and excitement, when looking on such a landscape, so peopled in variety of dress, and flashing arms, making the peaceful calm of nature blend into life by the tread of legions. Brief as was the period which fell to my lot to remain at Corfu, I have seldom since re-

curred to that period of my existence without ceasing to regret, that, although on various sporting expeditions and other excursions, I certainly saw much of the interior of the island, that I did not avail myself of the opportunity of seeing far more; and, I may add, for the information of those whose turn of duty may place them in so desirable a station, that there are very few foreign quarters which offer more agreeable variety to him who loves to pass his time of recreation, as I did, amid the numerous beauties and pleasures so amply provided by nature amid such wild and ever-changing scenery. To the sportsman, Corfu presents numerous facilities and advantages, for it would be difficult to find better woodcock and snipe-shooting in any part of Europe; wild fowl are also abundant, and an occasional trip over to the mainland will repay the most ardent lover of shooting, if he can put up with rough accommodation—and where is the real sportsman or soldier who cannot? As regards myself, I was frequently in the habit of making such delightful excursions

into the interior of the island, as also to the Morea, as much, however, I must admit, for the sake of the scenery, as for the actual use with the gun, though I yield to none in my sporting tastes. On one of these occasions, I determined to hire a country boat, and start for the land of the mountain and the woodcock. My party was to consist of four persons—two officers of the garrison, myself, and the fourth, a young friend termed in those parts a T. G., which, being interpreted, means a travelling gentleman, of no calling or profession, save that of amusing himself, who had recently arrived at the island in search of the picturesque—and, having brought letters of introduction, became a constant and welcome guest at the mess; and a well-bred youth he was, though decidedly not overburdened with that very necessary and valuable ingredient, termed common sense, as the sequel will prove. The morning of our departure on this little sporting trip, the weather was as bright and cloudless, as was our party a light-hearted and merry one. Having, therefore, shipped a good cargo of

provisions, together with sundry blankets and Greek capotes, without exception the best of friends as a protector from the night air, our little bark glided from the harbour, and the light breeze filling the sail, we soon landed on the opposite shore.

“Land of Albania, let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men !
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress-grove within each city’s ken.”

BYRON.

The appearance of the country, as we approached the rocky shore, was both wild and interesting ; and the numberless stunted but thickly-wooded ravines, gave promise of abundant sport on a spot where woodcocks are known to abound. Village or house we sought not ; and, had we done so, our search would, probably, have been fruitless, at least within easy distance of the little creek we had selected for our landing-place, which was a small, narrow, dark, woody inlet or cove, which afforded alike shelter and

firing, inasmuch as we there proposed trusting to the covering of our sail for quarters during the night—in fact, to make a regular bivouac. Having landed, we left the boat and her valuable cargo of cold pies to the protection of a Corfuot boatman and a soldier servant, directing them to prepare a fire under the rocks awaiting our return; then, with a sturdy savage-looking fellow, half sportsman, and, probably, at convenient seasons wholly a robber, for, indeed, few callings were amiss to him, but, nevertheless, a first-rate and an admirable guide for our purposes, we landed and sallied forth in search of game. I shall not, however, dwell too copiously here on the sporting peculiarities of our day's amusement—suffice, that we found abundance of woodcocks, as also snipe, a hare or two, and some ducks; and, having managed amongst us to fill a tolerable bag, with some difficulty we were at length enabled to find the boat again—and, having boiled some potatoes, and made a stew of hare and woodcocks, equal to any that Soyer could accomplish, we passed a

most agreeable evening, seated on the rocks of Albania. As darkness, however, closed this delightful day, the night became intensely cold, and we were right glad to cover ourselves up with our capotes, and get snugly under the boat sail, of which a sort of gipsy tent had been formed ; where, by the aid of some grog and a pipe, in the immediate vicinity of a good wood-fire on the rock, which we kept up for the double purpose of warmth and the scaring away of jackals, or any other midnight wanderers, we felt ourselves as secure and comfortable as if we were in a baron's castle. As the night advanced, however, the comforting effects of the brandy-and-water caused some of the party, fatigued by the day's ramble, to seek repose, and the T. G. was soon in a happy state of oblivion to all around. At this time the jackals, who, probably, smelt the remnants of the stew, commenced a most diabolical noise at no great distance, which, if not alarming, was by no means agreeable. Their vicinity, however, gave rise to a little merriment on the part of one of those still

on the watch, who instantly jumped up, and shaking unmercifully the sleeping T. G., declared the wild beasts were upon us. What was to be done? To put to sea at that period of the night, was to perish in an open boat—a large tree, however, was at hand, and into the safety of its branches we advised him to mount, declaring our intention to follow. When safely ensconced, however, we pushed off some short distance from the land, and left him to his fate, till the light of early morning, which was not long ere it made its appearance, had scared away the noisy jackals, and induced us to come to his relief.

My visit to Corfu I now considered to have been sufficiently protracted; and having, therefore, bid adieu to my warm-hearted friend, Temple, and expressed my gratitude for the abundant kindness I had received from his brother officers—moreover, being anxious to see more of the Islands, I took advantage of the kind offer of a Naval Captain about to proceed to Cephalonia with despatches, and once more found myself bounding over the deep blue waters, as a

passenger in His Majesty's ten gun-brig, the *Gadfly*. Our passage was short and agreeable, and without further inconvenience than that which arose from a somewhat rough sea; we came to anchor in the harbour of Argostoli, the capital of the island of Cephalonia.

During the period I remained there were two spots which I constantly visited; the one, formerly the country residence of the illustrious poet, Byron—the other, a forest on the Black Mountain, a few words in reference to which may not be without interest, as recalling more forcibly to mind the practical efforts made by Sir Charles Napier to improve the island. To this fine forest of firs, which grows within a league and a half of the town of Argostoli, the capital, in fact the only town in Cephalonia, the Resident, assisted, I believe, by the professional advice of a talented engineer officer, had made a road quite practicable, at the time to which I allude, for equestrians and even bullock-carts, and which has since been, doubtless, much improved. The wood itself covered the whole

top of the mountain to a considerable extent, and, at a favourable point of view, commanding the harbour, shipping, and town of Argostoli, as also a large portion of the island. A wooden house, or *châlet*, had been erected, principally, I imagine, as a convenience and protection from storms and inclement weather, for those employed in the making of the road; and to this *châlet* the officers stationed at Cephalonia were constantly in the habit of making excursions, either in search of red-legged partridges and quails, or simply for the purpose of passing their time in the enjoyment of fine scenery. Indeed, many a night, as well as day, have I passed in this rustic habitation, built from the firwood at hand, where, round a blazing fire, made from the cuttings of the pine and cones, a jovial party has met, and English song and English laughter have sounded through the midnight air—far, far away from the land of our homes.

This fine forest, situated, as I have already observed, on the summit of the Black Mountain, with very little care and atten-

tion, would have become a source of absolute riches to the inhabitants, who were necessitated to import all their wood for ship-building and house-building from afar, with much trouble and expense. And it is but justice to Sir Charles Napier, then Governor, to add, that during his residence he did all that his experienced mind could enable man to do, fettered by superior authority, to secure so desirable a result. I have been informed, that at one period the forest contained some of the finest pine trees in the world, but that it had been destroyed unfortunately by fire, owing to the negligence of the Greeks—since which time, the flocks of goats, which were permitted to range unmolested throughout its dark recesses, have effectually precluded anything like a good tree coming to maturity, as these animals have the habit of nipping off the shoots, and thus entirely destroying the growth of the tree. Thus, abundant crooked and stunted stumps may be seen on all sides, with the exception of a few young trees, which have flourished after the wise expulsion of the

goaty legion by Sir Charles. Since his departure, however, I understand they are allowed once more to commit their depredations unmolested, and thus while by care this extensive forest, from its bare thinnings, would have paid the expenses of its security, from the simple fact of the enormous expense of fire-wood at Argostoli, it is allowed once more to fall unheeded to decay.

One dull, but sultry day, the effect of which was by no means unpleasant, where so many are bright and beautiful, I sat with several officers on a small stone parapet, fronting their quarters, which the road alone divided from the waters of the harbour of Argostoli, killing time, as was the custom of too many, by the inhaling of tobacco-smoke for the pleasure of puffing it out again; looking, as I had done some hundred times before, on the distant mountains and wild scenery around me, and, if the truth were told, for imagination wanders far and wide, sometimes dwelling on far absent yet more pleasing scenes found alone amid the luxuriance and rich beauties of my own dear country—when the smoke of a steamer, curling up in

dense and blackening vapours, as she rounded the rocky point of the island, told of news being near at hand from the seat of government, as also, probably, letters from our friends at home. To those who have never crossed the wide waters to dwell in foreign lands, either on duty in the Services or as a traveller, it would be difficult to describe the intense interest of such an arrival. Even in these days, when the power of steam has so eminently proved its advantages to the colonial resident, it is doubtless an event of a most pleasurable nature, though naturally its far more frequent recurrence may tend to weaken the excitement felt at that period, when month after month elapsed without even the sight of a newspaper, and, what was tenfold more valuable to the anxious expectant, letters from the absent ones we love, perhaps more fondly from the separating distance. It is, therefore, incredible and proportionably difficult to explain the thrilling joy of heart experienced by such a sight, even should the news you hope for or anticipate be denied or uncongenial.

How soon then, on this occasion were the

hitherto slumbering thoughts of expectation kindled into active life, it is scarcely needful to say. How brief the time that elapsed ere we had secured a boat and were within hail of the vessel, or how soon after she had dropped her anchor, on board to hear the news—if news there was to hear. And truly on this occasion I was not doomed to disappointment, though that news was by no means of an agreeable nature.

Dear Gussy wrote, and dear Nelly also, of my home and the dear ones it contained—but, throughout these letters, it was clear to me there was an attempt to conceal feelings of sorrow, unusual at dear Brooklands, and anticipations of evil, alas! too soon to be realized. My good Dad was evidently cooling in reference to those out-door enjoyments which, in truth, had been the pleasure of his life. Mr. Snareall had paid repeated visits to the Hall, as to the neighbourhood. The firm of Payne and Co. were practically demonstrating their railway theories—navvies crowded beneath the aged oaks of that park which my ancestors venerated, and where

heretofore nothing but the antlered monarch or the timid hare had been permitted to repose. Even the foxes were scared from their coverts, hitherto unmolested, save by hounds.

The line of railway was already advancing which, traversing a portion of that beautiful locality, overthrew some noble trees, and eventually ruined the best of men. My father had succumbed in an evil hour to the idea of increasing a fortune—hitherto enough, and more than enough, for all; having obtained the high price given for his land, ill-advised, and, as I have said, totally ignorant of speculative habits, he expended that sum in shares here and there, some, for aught I know, in Kamschatka, or the air. And, while poor Forster became more than ever stagnated, dear Gussy trembled to witness the evident failing of health from such causes in one so gentle in mind, so noble and truthful in heart, as was our own beloved Dad, the Lord of Brooklands.

“Come back to us, dear Fred,” said Gussy; “your presence will do us all good—Nelly

joins with me in the hope, that you will soon return. Brooklands is altered, and we scarcely dare range the park, or ride the country round, as was our wont, for the hateful navvies."

My determination was soon acted on—I accepted the kind offer of the captain of a line-of-battle ship, and sailed for Malta.

CHAPTER XI.

MALTA, thou rocky gem of the ocean, or little military hot-house, as Lord Byron so truly termed it, how many pleasing recollections, how many reminiscences, of by-gone days does the writing of thy name bring back to the mind, as were it only yesterday I numbered as one of thy inhabitants (in the memory of the past)! Probably there are few finer sights than that which falls to the lot of him who, standing on the battery of St. Elmo, which flanks the immediate entry of the harbour of Valetta, beholds a line-of-battle ship with sails well-filled by the breeze, and a bright sky aloft, making for the safe

refuge of that noble port—a sight little less interesting to him who, walking her deck, for the first time, looks on the knightly city. If the former more frequently caused me intense admiration, the effect of the latter can never be forgotten.

When writing or speaking of places, however, there are few men, though equally acquainted with the locality, who, probably, would not be disposed to give a very different opinion on the subject of its merits. Indeed, it would be utterly impossible to attempt to analyze the variety of feelings, causes, and associations, which influence different individuals to speak locally; at the same time, I imagine I shall carry a large military majority with me, when I confess my partiality for Malta over all other stations in the Mediterranean. And more particularly at the period to which I allude, for it would, probably, have been difficult to select from the British army a finer garrison, or to have chosen a governor, and other superior officers, both military and civil, whose duties were more admirably performed, and whose society was more desirable.

With regard to Malta as an island, its peculiarities are, possibly, as well known to the general reader as to those whose pleasure or profession may have caused them to reside there. It is, probably, the only spot in the wide world formed by nature literally as a rock, which the hand of man has converted into a pleasure-ground; and, with regard to Valetta as a town, take it from its present foundation and place it in the centre of a luxurious valley of the garden of England, and it would be a city of palaces in a vale of wealth. Yet even where it stands, on its iron-bound foundation, overlooking the dark blue waters of the wide ocean, it is alone in its peculiar features of brightness and beauty. The cathedral—whose gilded gates, like those of Juggernaut, torn from their hinges by the ruthless hand of war, but not, like those, restored, having been, doubtless, converted into coin for the payment of the French soldiery—is rich in architectural and local beauty. The palace of the governor, quaint in appearance, yet grand in outline and dimensions, heretofore the abode of the Grand-Master,

with the Auberges de Castille, de Baviere, and of Provence, the spacious residences of the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, now the quarters of the British officers, are all buildings of interest and beauty; and the white stone edifices, and the noble square, and the mighty batteries, and the splendid harbour; where do more pleasing and gratifying sights meet the eye of the wanderer in the east? Then pass from the city-gate to the country beyond its limits, if such it can be termed, it is almost impossible to believe that every yard you tread on is artificially formed by earth brought from the mainland or hewn from the massive rock. And now look on the hedges of bright red geranium, the caper plant clinging to the rocks, the abundant and luscious grapes, the sweet and fragrant orange, and the yellow citron; the gardens of St. Antonio unsurpassed in beauty; the bright sun unquestionably a trifle too hot at times, during a few months of the year—but at all other seasons, how clear, how exhilarating is the climate of Malta.

But let me speak for awhile of those with whom it was my good fortune to be associated—he who had led the 12th Lancers to victory and glory on the blood-stained field of Waterloo, and who fell himself, wounded almost unto death, and trampled beneath the dying steeds and bodies of those he had headed in the charge, then held the baton of Chief-in-command at Malta; the Commandant of Engineers, now living in peace at home, and enjoying his well-merited distinctions and honours—where was the house more readily opened than his for courteous and unbounded hospitality? beneath whose roof was more frequently heard the cheerful sounds of music, the merry dance, and happy sound of laughter?—and the Colonial Secretary; and many others, alas! no more. And the garrison—see that dark battalion clad in green, with bugles in advance, how steadily they move and take up their position on the left of the brigade of close columns formed on the esplanade of Floriana for a field-day—they are the 2nd battalion of the Rifle Brigade, who yield to no corps—and

justly so—in their high state of discipline and admirable appearance. Then listen to the merry tune which sounds through the clear air—it is the band of the 85th Light Infantry, which heads that regiment, as, with beautiful precision and arms trailed, they form on the right of the Rifles; well do they merit their motto, "*Aucto splendore resurgam.*" But who is that soldier who, seated firmly on his black charger, with the large bearskin cap, watching with scrutinizing and anxious eye the coming of that dark mass which now appears in sight? He is the Colonel of Albuera's heroes, who now advance so steadily and firmly, as if, alike in peace as war, they were about to overwhelm an enemy which their lighter comrades had already caused to waver. Without a sound, save their equal tread, without a word, but silently and with the utmost precision, this splendid regiment forms on the right flank. Then comes the 73rd regiment of the line—and truly 'tis a corps not inferior to those who came before—and fill the vacant place in the column. But why forget

the Malta Fencibles, who also take their ground, and do credit to their island? These splendid regiments having thus assembled, deploy into line, and magnificent to a military eye is this glorious sight of the garrison of Malta! Watch well their movements on the parade-ground; see well into their efficiency; judge of their interior economy; know how they were officered; by whom commanded—England might well be proud of such a force, and Englishmen spare with a more liberal hand the little they so unwillingly bestow on the nation's gallant defenders.

Having said thus much of the garrison of Malta, let me now dwell briefly on Maltese pleasures. Two-thirds of the year you enjoy the finest climate in the world. To secure you against the discomfort arising from the oppressive temperature of the remaining portion, you have large airy houses, lofty and well-ventilated rooms with stone floors, iced champagne, iced porter, iced lemonade, and everything else iced that is iceable to cool you. The society is generally agreeable;

and the bright eyes which peep from beneath the graceful faldetta, as you perambulate up and down the grand square flanked by the palace and the main guard, listening or pretending to listen to the band, as all did with any pretension to fashion, were by no means the most disagreeable features in the scene. I shall, however, endeavour, for the information of such of our military readers who as yet have not been stationed at Malta, to give them a simple but faithful description of the existence usually passed at that agreeable quarter, selecting any three days out of the 365, at different periods of the year. Bear in mind, however, I speak of days lang syne; all may be now as much changed as are the state of things in the mother-country, and many of the familiar faces whose society I then enjoyed, are now numbered with the dead. My selection shall be a spring day, a summer's day, and an autumn day—the quarters Floriana, windows facing the harbour—time, spring. About 8 A.M. the servant appears; being a soldier, and not an experienced valet, in his attempt to open

the shutters, and make his master fully aware that it is no longer night, he tumbles over a chair or table—and thus terminate an officer's hours of refreshing sleep, or dozing rumination, perhaps the most agreeable of the two; on second thoughts he rises, but instead of putting on his dressing-gown, he pulls off his shirt, and immerses himself bodily in a large tub of cold water; this pleasing duty over, he proceeds to throw aside his windows, and, looking out on the fine harbour and its multitude of shipping, sniff a little morning air; then he dresses in demi-costume, which means regimental trowsers ready for parade, a shooting jacket, sailor's jacket, dressing-gown, or any equally easy costume; then comes breakfast, which requires considerable attention; after which, cigar No. 1, a little lively chat, and a little practical joking; the first call of the bugle sounds for parade, and the *déshabille* is changed for the undress coat or shell-jacket. This arduous task being over, should it not be his turn for regimental or garrison duty, the remainder of the day is left entirely at

his disposal, mentally and physically. The moment, therefore, he reaches his quarters, he divests himself at once of every article of dress appertaining to military costume, throws himself on his sofa, as if he had gone through immense fatigue, and comforts himself with cigar No. 2; then reads a book, if he has one, and is of a literary turn of mind, or writes to his friends in England, complaining of the enormous expenses incurred by a residence in Malta. About one o'clock he feels inclined to do something to break into the day, so, having breakfasted, he eats his luncheon whether he is hungry or not, and then, having ordered his horse, or, more properly speaking, galloway, which is an indispensable and actual necessary, kept by every officer in the garrison, he takes a racket in his hand (for, be it known, there was, and, doubtless, still is, a first-rate racket court at Malta), whether he intends to play or not, inasmuch as this little implement of pleasure, and of pain to many, in the way of losing dollars, is a safeguard to his appearing under the very nose of his excellency the

Governor, or that of his Colonel, in a dress as much as possible like that of a West India planter (with the exception of the brim of his straw-hat, which it was the fashion to have very narrow, of course, to protect his eyes from the sun), and as unlike as possible to that of a British officer in garrison. He then seeks a companion, if possible as pleasant a fellow as himself, and, having mounted his rosinante, applies the tinder to cigar No. 3, and starts at a gallop across the esplanade or rock, on which the grass certainly does grow, but how, or wherefore, I know not, for soil there is none. And then, having entered the gates of Valetta, he rides through the streets in the most easy, independent manner possible, nodding to all he knows, which are the majority, and looking at all he does not know, which are the minority, in a sort of—
“Does your mother know you’re out” style, till he arrives at the celebrated café called “Joe Micallif’s;” here he gives his nag into the hands of his faithful bare-footed smitch, who, having run while he has ridden, never-

theless arrives before him. He then inquires who is on guard, and, finding it is Snooks of the Rifles, or Billy somebody of the 85th, instantly beats up his quarters, where he finds six or seven pleasant fellows of different corps, killing time, as he intends to do, by eating his eatables and drinking his drinks; as a matter of course, he helps himself to No. 4 cigar, from a box placed, *pro bono publico*, on the guard-room table—and, having said his say, and done his best to eat a second luncheon at Snooks' expense, he leaves him to his fate, within the limits of his sentries, and proceeds to the racket-court, where, if he ever had the slightest intention or power of using the racket, which hitherto has only been employed on the hind-quarters of his cavallo, he must await his turn, if not, he selects the losing players, and, consequently, leaves the court minus twenty dollars, which he can ill afford, simply *pour passer le temps*. Then he seeks his nag again, and takes a turn on the Pieta, a celebrated race-course—of which more anon—and decidedly the most distin-

guished equestrian promenade in the island, being formed, as all others in the island, on a rock, instead of turf or gravel; and then home, to dress for dinner, either at the palace, the house of a civilian, who keeps a good cook, some friendly mess of another regiment, or his own, where he generally meets a sprinkling of Post Captains, Commanders, Lieutenants R.N., and Midshipmen, all fond of iced champagne, and having no decided objection to bottled porter. In their agreeable and convivial society, champagne, or, more properly speaking, Maltese small-beer, for such it is termed, being discussed *ad libitum*, he whiles away the time, till the hour arrives for looking in at the opera—for be it known that Malta boasts a very pretty opera, though rarely of a very pretty prima donna; and, though it sounds somewhat grand, each regiment possesses an opera box, as near as possible to the foot-lights and the prompter's box; the former of which are sometimes smashed out of courtesy, the latter flying as if by magic at the basso's head. But then these operatic

officers hold a rod steeped in pickle, which they sometimes wield with far more terror and destruction to managers, than the mighty voice from the omnibus-box of Her Majesty's theatre, in the little city called London. Having shewn himself at the opera, if a ball be the order of the night, he attends it—if not, he looks into the racing-club, inquire the odds on the Grand-Master's Stakes, backs Smitch for the cup, Mungree for his match with Smitch, Bob against anything, and Smolensko—alas! poor Smolensko—for the Maiden Stakes. Then ends his day, or rather night, at Joe's; smokes cigars, 5, 6, 7, 8; abuses all the world; lights No. 9; and gets into bed just as he finishes No. 10.

A summer's day elapses much under the same circumstances as that of a spring, save that you become either paler, or more like a piony in the physiognomy, lose considerably in flesh, if you have any to lose—are more lazy and less given to drills and parades—smoke as much as ever, or more—play rackets with the thermometer at 94, and

drink gallons of iced lemonade or anything else iced that comes in your way—change your shirt and white unmentionables three times a day, and grumble at your washing bills—go to bed much later at night, that is, generally when the gun fires in the morning, having passed the midnight hours in sitting round a table, placed in the great square in front of Joe's café, on which burnt, unruffled by the slightest air, sundry wax candles, from which you light your cigar. The costumes around this table are various and cool: some have white jackets, others shell jackets bound with lace, open in front, and shewing a white waistcoat beneath—these gentlemen have returned from neighbouring festivities; others have coats of some sort, but, in order to cool the outward man, as they are endeavouring to cool the inward by iced libations, they have divested themselves of such useless coverings, and sit in their shirts. Bang!—the guns reverberate through the morning air, from guard-ship and from battery; the light streak, harbinger of coming day, lights up the eastern horizon;

those stationed in the Auberges in the city wend their way homewards; Fusiliers to Floriana. On reaching the gate which opens on the glacis of the outworks, which really is an esplanade, as it is termed, you find some score of mules and donkeys laden with fresh fruit and vegetables, accompanied by numerous Maltese drivers, who await the booming of the morning gun—the signal for permission to enter the city of Valetta; you hand a shilling to one of these sun-burnt individuals, and approach the beast who bears the most aromatic-scented burden, and behold, on opening the cover of the panniers, the rich and luscious fruit, the large water melon, the sweet and juicy grapes, and the fragrant and delicious white nectarine; with these you refresh yourself amply, for the humble price above named, to say nothing of those you pocket—and then home to bed, where you remain with the covering of a single sheet until the mid-day sun has relinquished some of its enfeebling power.

Then approaches the autumnal day: how exhilarating, how elastic is the arrival of the

cooler atmosphere and the bright blue skies ; drills and parades become more frequent, and nectarines more scarce—the orange becomes tinged with a golden hue, and the Malta races are at hand ; then are the sporting gentlemen, and gentlemen jockies, on the *qui vive*, truly I may say from night till morning, and morning until night, these races were undoubtedly most exciting pastimes in the annals of the military history of Malta. Could the knights of old have risen from their graves, they would have looked on the assembled multitude who graced the Pieta on such occasions, and beheld Her Majesty's officers of both services equipped in leathers and top boots, with as much astonishment, doubtless, as would our grandpapas, did they find themselves journeying to Exeter in an express train. But, with reference to the Pieta, as a race-course, I would beg to be permitted a few words of description : picture to your mind, then, a hard, rocky, dusty road, varying in breadth from fifteen feet in the narrowest part to five-and-forty in the

broadest, and about a short mile in length ; this road being flanked on the one side by houses, on the other by a portion of the quarantine harbour, which, when the tide was up, might, probably, be five feet deep, close to the road or race-course, unprotected by a parapet. The form of this course was almost absolutely in the shape of a right angle, save that one side of it was rather longer than the other, the narrowest point being exactly at the turn of the angle, and at the very spot where pace began to tell. Like all other parts, the water at this point was close up to the road, and the only protection from the houses on the off-side were two iron guns, in the way of posts, so placed, I conceive, to prevent carriage-wheels, when turning, from cutting off the corner of the house. Only fancy for one moment, such jockies as Robinson, John Day, or "George Bentinck," being asked to ride on such a course ; nevertheless, first-rate sport—good riding, and abundant diversion—was there exhibited, the greatest difficulty to contend with, being the inconceivable hardness of the

rock; for pick-axes, tan, and everything within the range of possibility were applied, but with little success, save as to kicking up a dust. During these autumnal mornings, so soon as it was light, indeed, frequently before it was actually so, a month previous to the races, the Pieta became a place of constant resort to two-thirds of the male portion of the garrison; there you might behold the owners of studs watching their high mettled racers, who, clothed with due precaution, and mounted by their gentlemen stable-lads—subsequently to becoming the jockies—now galloped, now walked the animals along the Pieta; now a trial came off, now an officer fell off. Betters and book-makers were there to watch these manoeuvres, with all the solemnity and keenness of those elsewhere, who have thousands of pounds depending on the Derby or St. Leger, instead of hundreds of dollars on the Grandmaster's stakes. At night, the members of the Jockey Club meet, with cigars in their mouths and whips in their hands, as if all Malta was ready to mount on horseback.

Around the tables of the illustrious Joe were congregated innumerable sporting subs, sporting captains, and last and least, sporting mids, who drank punch and bet dollars, as if the fate of nations hung on the approach of the Malta races ; in fact, they were hailed by men, women, and children, of high and low degree, with delight and nervous expectation. Nothing was heard from the Palace to the Pieta, Pieta to Floriana, Floriana to Baviere, and Baviere to Provence, but the merits of the horses and their riders. Ten to one on Smitch ; five to four on Zingance ; and even on Mungee, saluted you on all sides. Dinner parties were made up, not to discuss gastronomy, but racing ; balls were given that you might bet gloves with the fair creatures, and perhaps, during the riding mania, ride off with one of them. Saveri, the celebrated horse-dealer, was the beloved object of all the mids in the squadron, who hired out all his stock at a premium for the race week. The prima donna at the opera sung her sweetest songs amid sporting discussions in the stage boxes, and punch, *à la*

Pieta, was poured in gallons down the throats of all the military and naval officers at the station ; in fact, while the atmospheric thermometer was lower, that of human excitement was at fever height. These were merry days, but they are long past ; yet, let one of those who enjoyed them, should these humble pages meet his eye, deny, if he can, their truthfulness.

Home, sweet home, be it ever so humble —never was an assertion more true than that the human heart is ever centred there ; as regards myself I own that, amid all my wanderings, the charms of home had ever held a prominent place in my affection, and notwithstanding all the charms of Malta I have endeavoured herein to detail, I felt but little chagrin when I started for the shores of England. Who that hath travelled, who that hath left home and much-loved friends, even for a few short years, whether his absence has been caused by duty, pleasure, or from any cause whatever, that can fail to experience the thrill of heart, the pleasurable emotion of those who once more find them-

selves at home? There probably are some—there may be many—who, from being less sensitive in their nature, or less anxious in their mental anticipations, take such periods of life, as they do all others, with calmness, if not indifference; and although we must admit, they may suffer less when they find, as is generally the case, that their hopes have far exceeded the painful realities of life's existence, still we envy them not; however severe the anguish of disappointment, life without hope would be a barren soil indeed. To him who returns from a service of some score of years in India, having left home, friends, and relations, as mere children, we admit that the alteration he must discover in all persons and all things, is almost sufficient to cast a gloom on his heart for the rest of his days. Many whom he had loved in early youth are dead; others with whom he may have passed his days of schoolboy friendship have forgotten his very existence; and the mother—the dear fond mother!—the beloved father, the attached young brother, and the darling sisters, where

are they all? if alive, and longing to receive him, he forgets how altered he is himself, when he looks on them almost as strangers—so changed are they; or, what is far more probable, he finds the parent stock no more, and the companions of his childhood scattered and estranged by the heartless world. Had it been my fate to have made this long pilgrimage in a foreign land, I confess I should almost have desired to have terminated my career far from these much-loved scenes from which in person I had been so long separated, hugging, at the same time, fond images and fond remembrances of early youth to my heart's core, than return to find all blasted by the hand of time, and dwelling in reality only in the existence of imagination. And yet, if I were to return, let me enjoy the feverish hope of excitement to the last, and struggle manfully with the reality of sorrow.

My homeward continental tour having been rapid, late in the season, and for the most part alone, I dwelt but briefly on the abundant beauties and scenes of interest

which otherwise would have been a source of unremitting admiration ; and, as I sought not for adventure, or other cause to detain me on my route, but few offered themselves. On one occasion, however, a trifling incident, which might have proved more serious, caused me some little uneasiness, if not alarm : I had hired a crazy caleche, in which I was journeying from Turin to Genoa, being some five or six leagues from the latter city, the hour about five P.M.—I was desirous of reaching it that night, however late, in order to enjoy at least a couple of days in viewing its many beauties. Having, however, arrived at a lone post-house, situate in a very romantic and secluded spot, the postilion discovered that some misfortune had occurred to one of the axles of the wheels, and proved that it would be utterly useless and impossible to proceed without an inevitable upset. This was literally the case ; moreover, there was not even a blacksmith within half a league ; alternative, therefore, I had none, but that of remaining for the night with all the patience I could

muster. Now, like all the world, I had heard and read, and, moreover, knew it to be a fact, that in the fair land of Italia, at road-side hostelries, in such dreary and desolate places as our wheel had selected for a mishap, that landlords were frequently in league with postilions to drive the fatted calf to slaughter, added to which, I admit that I am somewhat of a nervous temperament when in the dark as to an enemy—if I see the fence, it is all well, I endeavour to jump it like the rest of my friends; nevertheless, there I was, tired, hungry, and dull enough; the accommodation was anything but good, yet I have seen much worse; so, having been shewn into a tolerable room, with a bed in one corner—a good fire soon blazed on the hearth—and, being provided with some excellent cigars, I put a good face on the matter. The worthy host, who appeared to be landlord, waiter, and everything else, was exceedingly officious and inquisitive to a degree; he spoke good French, and amazingly soon informed me, possibly in order to obtain the same confidence on my

part, that his profession had been that of a cook—moreover, that he had not only lived in several English families of distinction, but also in that of Sir R. Maitland, when Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Isles; this information was so far satisfactory, that I immediately hoped for and expressed my wish for a good supper, in which I was not disappointed. Having, however, done my possible in regard to the gastronomic duties, I called for some cognac and hot water, lighted a cigar, looked at the fire, and thought various things, but, among others, that which ever turned uppermost was the why and wherefore a man who had been a cook to an English nobleman, and lastly to such a man as Maitland, and, moreover, whom I could not help feeling was a Frenchman and not an Italian, should have selected the dreary spot above all others in which I found myself, to set up a sign for the accommodation of weary travellers; and the answer always came to this fact, Because he is a rogue, who cannot live elsewhere—I, therefore, took precautions accordingly.

Pistols I had none, as I never anticipated being murdered for my Napoleons—though, in this instance, I had a bag containing well nigh a hundred; moreover, I had papers of importance. The Naps and the letters I consequently took from my portmanteau, and placed them beneath my pillow, and the portmanteau in a chair by the bed-side. This done, I sat up as long as possible; at length, however, all being quiet, I rang the bell, and the *ciderant* cook appeared.

“What is the hour?”

“Past midnight, Signor.”

“You have had my carriage attended to?”

“Si, Signor.”

“Then be good enough to call me at five; let me have a cup of coffee, and the horses ready to start immediately.”

“It shall be as your excellency desires. Good-night.” He took a survey of the apartment, and made his exit.

“Confound you and your excellency, for an ugly-looking, cut-throat Frenchman,” said I—and, throwing two or three logs on the fire, jumped into bed.

To sleep, however, I found impossible ; my thoughts wandered in every direction, ever returning to the ugly features of mine host, as my eyes on the burning embers, in which I distinguished innumerable living pictures ; at length, towards the matinal hours of half-past two or three, I began to doze a little, when I imagined I heard a trifling noise as if some person was about to enter the apartment ; I accordingly closed my eyes, keeping the mind, however, as wide awake as possible, when lo ! who should enter but the individual uppermost in our thoughts ; cautiously he proceeded, first looked at the fire, then at the portmanteau, then, with a small lamp in hand, approached my bed ; I felt, as doubtless many others would have felt in a similar situation, that is, a species of moist all-overishness difficult to define, though many call it fear. Stilettes appeared to flash across the scene, and a painful sensation of feeling one between the ribs in imagination. Having passed the lamp across my eyes, which I still had sufficient courage or curiosity in regard to his

proceedings to keep closed, and imagining doubtless that I was in a happy state of oblivion, he turned to survey the contents of my portmanteau with the most decided intent of appropriating any valuables which might appear worthy his acceptance; considering, however, that he had sufficiently amused himself and frightened me, I turned and coughed a little; like all guilty men, he appeared somewhat startled, but nevertheless, with considerable coolness, proceeded to throw another log on the fire; I was now wide awake, and immediately demanded the cause of such unusual intrusion.

“Signor,” said he, with the most undisturbed accent possible, “I came previous to retiring to see that you required nothing further.”

This was a good joke at three in the morning, with the intention I had expressed of starting at five. To be free of the wretch was, however, all I required—so, having requested his absence with the least possible delay, no sooner was the door closed, than I proceeded to barricade it with sundry

chairs, on which I placed a basin and jug ; and thus having secured the entrance from further intrusion without alarm, I retired once more and slept soundly till the light of heaven proclaimed another day, and rendered further vigilance unnecessary ; yet, as this little affair really occurred, it has frequently since crossed my mind that I most unquestionably should have been relieved from the care of some of my effects, and possibly might never have lived to tell the tale, had the golden coins so snugly deposited beneath my pillow caught the eye of the lusty cuisinier—for the motto of such gentlemen, generally speaking, is—"Nihil jus, nihil fas ; aurum, vis, et Venus imperabat," or, according to the just interpretation of the talented author of *Borgia*, with them there are—"no laws, no rights ; gold, violence, and licentiousness ruling all." But the bright sun once more shone on the fair landscape, and the air was so pure and so exhilarating, that I really felt, all things considered, an unusual flow of spirits when I was once more fairly on my way for Genoa, though not without

some apprehension that I might still have been poisoned by the coffee, which, excellent as it was, I could not resist swallowing. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the country as you approach Genoa: the blue sky above and the equally blue waters of the Mediterranean below; the woods, the gardens, the scattered and vine-clad villas—such pictures in their peculiar features are rarely seen save in Italy.

But I am at home once more;—home, be it ever so humble, there is no place like home, and such a home as Brooklands.

But, alas! it was but too evident that the health of him most beloved by us all was fast failing. Those who looked on with hearts yearning with affectionate interest were not blind to his mental sufferings, however rigorously endeavoured to be concealed. The arrival of Temple, however, always a great favourite with the Lord of Brooklands, accompanied by no less a person than Chevreul, served for a brief season to revive his failing strength and spirits; and for the last time, we had the joy of beholding him once more

mounted on old Corbeau, whose physical energies, like those of his master, were giving way to time. Never can I forget that morning, the last of his appearance in the hunting field, or that the sunshine of nature rose to cheer his noble spirit ere to his eyes it set for ever. We mustered a strong party, as we rode leisurely towards a private covert on the Brooklands estate, where, in honour of Chevreul, the Earl had kindly appointed the meet. In the race rode him who in years past had often led the field, his well beloved Gussy by his side, while Chevreul, to whom in courtesy I had granted a mount on the Friar, was honoured by a place on her right. Nelly, dear Nelly, was my companion, and Arty, home from Oxford, brought up the rear with Temple, two merry lads were they. Bradly, also, though somewhat heavier as to weight, and older as to years, followed, neat and well turned out as ever. As in other days he had charge, in case of a find, of the young ladies, of which he was not a little proud.

It was truly a pleasant sight to behold

that aged man, with his silvery hair, but still bright eye, surrounded by his friends and children; still more beautiful to witness the friendship, almost amounting to affection, with which he was welcomed by his neighbours and the members of the hunt. Barley-corn was also there, more lusty and more sedate; his face less red, his hair here and there interspersed with grey; and Ploughshare, but no longer on a pull away thoroughbred, and somewhat tamed as to his jumping propensities. In fact, no change was perceptible to the eye of the stranger save what time as it rolls on had effected since the day when we made our debut on Silvertail and the Jumper. Nevertheless it was great, and evident to those who having known many of the assembled party from youth upward, now missed many a well known face, and I saw too clearly that many were still there who would soon cease to meet in the hunting field. After a capital day's sport, which our dear Dad rather partially witnessed than took part in, Chevreul, aided by the admirable hunter on which he was mounted, having

greatly distinguished himself and been inconceivably delighted, we returned home once more to meet around the social board, unhappily for the last time, inasmuch as an event took place as little expected as painful. Temple left us the following morning to rejoin his regiment, accompanying Chevreul as far as London on his return to France, and a few days subsequently our dear father took to his bed, from which he never rose. In life the sun had risen to him on a life of more than common joyousness; it shone on his manhood with increased splendour, and set, alas! with those he loved around his bed, who happily then little knew his heart had long been breaking.

CONCLUSION.

It is not long since by the side of the once laughter-loving Gussy, now in life's meridian, that with eyes overflowing with tears, in memory of other days, I stood beneath two wide spreading beech trees, growing on a commanding eminence, and justly admired far and wide as ornaments to the home park at dear Brooklands.

The long summer's evening was all but closing into midnight, as with full hearts and painfully wearied memories we once more looked on a scene so familiar, so sad, and yet so dear to our hearts. On the left flowed the gentle trout stream—time had little altered that—save that it rolled along as wearied, with its many winds and fallings, it seemed glad at last to find a peaceful level, as it glided onwards towards the placid lake, diffusing its soothing influences and imparting its untiring charms throughout the lovely green and luxuriant vale of Brooklands.

Man, intelligent man, with an eye so wonderfully formed to take in, a heart to feel, and a taste to enjoy the beauties which the God of nature has so bountifully spread before him, could not be slow to discover and yield to the enchanting beauties of the spot. And to us, the crowding influences engendered by memories of the past, were such as to call forth the most keen associations of pleasure as of pain.

“Alas, dear friend,” I exclaimed, “turning to my companion, who stood gazing on the calm below us with eyes intently watching the home of her childhood, which appeared in the distance, surrounded by rich woodlands and plantations which clothed the adjacent hills—while substantial farmhouses were scattered along the fields of the level lands, and the humble cottages of the peasant gleamed from the sunny summits all around, “Joyous were the days, when the dear Lord of Brooklands reigned supreme in yon mansion, the friend of all, and to all the friend! I fancy I behold him now, riding along the lower park on his favourite hunter, Corbeau,

with poor Fred and you, my dear Gussy, by his side, as in other days.

“But, alas! how soon the all-powerful love of gain casts from the heart of man that peace, often found in a country life surrounded by its many charms. That peace in which floats the melody of singing birds, the sounds of lowing herds, the murmuring of mazy waters, and the hum of the busy honey-gathering bee, which now fall so soothingly on hearts even so sad as are ours.

“But tell me, dear Gussy, that of which I am still ignorant, though long years have flown by since the walls of yon house echoed to the sounds of merry voices—How came it that our much-lamented Fred never occupied the home of his ancestors?”

“It is briefly told. You see the line of railway, which now divides, as it were, yon peaceful vale; you well recollect in other days the visit my poor father received from a person named Snareall.”

“Full well: Poor Nelly was always indignant whenever his name was mentioned.”

“Well, by the right of mortgage, the rental

of every acre of the estate belongs to him ; while I, the last descendant of a long line of noble ancestors, am allowed therefrom a pittance. He cannot sell the estate, however, during my lifetime. But with me the entail ceases ; and so, should the will of God so decree it, that he who Nelly declared as dishonouring a Brooklands carpet by his footsteps, outlive me, he can claim it as his own.

“ The few thousands given in the first instance to my father for the land and right of way, were, by his advice, invested in shares of other lines, most, if not all of them existing in the minds of speculators ; and when my beloved Dad left this world of woe, we ascertained that almost the whole of the estate was mortgaged to supply means for these ruinous speculations. Poor Fred made a vain effort to save the estate, but he failed, and the few remaining acres followed the rest ; and when too late we discovered, that the adviser and counsellor was himself the sole mortgagee. Poor Fred died soon after, as you know, when you were far

away ; his death, I fully believe, being accelerated by anxiety of mind. And I, the last and only daughter of the Westerns, am a ward in Chancery.

“ Recollect, however, dear friend, the whole family were united to the last in one common bond of heart’s affection, and while I thank God for so many years of childhood’s happiness, unalloyed more, perhaps, than is allotted to many, that I have learnt in my afflictions, that a firm and unwavering faith and belief in the promises of my Redeemer, may hereafter, nay, will hereafter join me, in another and far brighter world, to those I so fondly loved in this ; and with such joys before me, which I hold fast to my heart of hearts, I envy not the ill-gained riches of Mr. Snareall, nor even desire to regain possession of the Old Hall at home.”

FINIS.

